



Handy Handouts®

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What's in Your Bag?

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Every speech-language pathologist (SLP) can relate to the struggle of finding the right materials to use during therapy sessions, especially when working with preschool-aged children who require many different activities. Choosing just the right items to engage children as they improve their language and articulation skills can be a difficult task. It's important to include toys that encourage and increase social engagement and cognitive skills, as well as receptive and expressive language skills. Here are a few essentials to fill your speech and language bag.



1. No Spill Bubbles - Use bubbles in a variety of ways to increase vocabulary, articulation, oral motor skills, and joint attention skills (when one individual alerts another to an object by means of eye-gazing, pointing, or other verbal or non-verbal indications). Most children love bubbles, so the SLP can also use them as a great reinforcement tool.



2. Search Bag - Place different items inside a pillowcase, canvas bag, or another bag made with material that is difficult to see through. Have the child reach inside the bag to find the item you describe. This creates a sense of excitement, and it's great for language development.



3. Ball - Increase joint attention, turn taking, fine motor skills, and vocabulary skills using a small ball.



4. Blocks or Building Materials - Simple blocks can assist in targeting basic concepts vocabulary such as: more, up, down, on top, under, tall, short, colors, etc. When you finish building with the blocks, it is fun to knock them down and start over again.



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5. Toy Animals - Animals often play a part in learning early vocabulary. The child can imitate animal sounds in learning how to articulate early speech sounds.



6. Doll - Dolls provide numerous activities and opportunities to learn and practice language and vocabulary. Activities such as naming body parts and participating in joint play lead to understanding verbs, sentence building, answering questions, and more.



7. Picture Books - Books with simple repetition and early vocabulary words are useful during therapy. The therapist can make it entertaining by emulating sounds and using different intonations while reading. Interactive books with sections to open and close, touch, or move are also engaging.



8. Graduated Stacking Rings - These simple motivational toys for children help develop reasoning and fine motor skills.



9. Wind-Up Toys - Target joint attention, asking for help, understanding simple commands, and work on fine motor skills using these small toys.



10. Puzzles - Target receptive and expressive skills using puzzles with different scenes, numbers, letters, animals, etc. For preschool-aged children, puzzles with wooden pegs or tiny knobs are best for little hands.

A well-packed speech and language bag can help an SLP keep children engaged with numerous activities, making every therapy session more productive and fun for everyone!

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