

# Marvellous Makers

## Library event ideas from RNIB

### Activities for sighted children (to gain empathy and understanding of vision impairment)

#### Activity 1: Create your own sim specs

Sim specs (short for simulation spectacles) are designed to recreate aspects of certain eye conditions to encourage understanding of them.

Cut out some paper or cardboard standard glasses and make a small hole in the middle of the 'lens' by piercing it with a pencil. Put the glasses on to see what it's like to have tunnel vision or a lack of peripheral vision.

With the sim specs on, ask the child to put together a simple puzzle or read a page of text from a book. Try this first with and then without the sim specs on.

Discuss how it makes them feel, how they had to try and adapt to do the task and then talk about ways they might help a child they met with that kind of vision impairment.

#### Aims:

- Empathy: Feel what it's like to complete straightforward daily tasks with a vision impairment.
- Understanding: By putting the puzzle together with limited vision, they begin to understand more about what it's like to move and accomplish tasks with a vision impairment.



## Activities for sighted children (to gain empathy and understanding of vision impairment)

### Activity 2: Build a story

Some books for children are designed to be read only by touch, whether that's using braille or by making the pictures themselves tactile.

Encourage children to create a story that is told using objects. This can either be by presenting a series of items from a bag or box and inviting the child/children to make a story using these as prompts or, if there is access to a wide enough range of materials, by sticking these to paper to create a tactile book.

Suggested prompts from a bag or box:

- An old wristwatch
- Shells
- Coins
- A brightly coloured scarf
- A bell or other small musical item

Suggested materials for creating a tactile book:

- Twigs and leaves to represent trees
- Small stones and pebbles to make houses
- Fabric to create characters' clothing
- Scraps of faux fur, faux leather or feathers to represent animals

### Aims:

- Imagination: use sensory information to inspire the creation of new ideas and adventures.
- Communication: develop confidence in speaking and listening and expanding vocabulary.
- Empathy: understand that touch can provide information about the world to a child with vision impairment.

## Activities for children with vision impairment

### Activity 3: LEGO® session

Create something that is meaningful to the child/children. It can be whatever they want, but some suggestions to get started are a pet, their house, a person, a favourite toy or something from a favourite film.

Make this session personalised to children with a vision impairment by using only LEGO® bricks with high contrast colours and pieces with identifiable shapes, such as flowers or wheels.

After the items have been created, talk to each child about why they created it and what parts were difficult or easy. What would they do differently if they did it again?

#### Aims:

- Comprehension: The child must understand the concept of creating an item with LEGO® and then talk about why they created it.
- Sensory play: Using their sense of touch to identify what object they are holding, feeling the bricks and creating an object with their hands.

**Important note:** Be wary of small choking hazards.

## Activities for children with vision impairment

### Activity 4: Write a nature-inspired story

Encourage creative writing or storytelling skills with one of the following challenges (or use your own). If the child is too young to write or struggles with writing, encourage them to tell you their story so you can write it down for them.

- Describe a magical woodland using all five senses.
- Find an object on a nature walk and tell the story of how it got there.
- Write a story that involves at least two of the following items:
  - magnifying glass
  - oak tree
  - beehive
  - spider
- Describe a day in the life of your garden or street from the perspective of:
  - sitting in a tree
  - a bird in flight
  - a hunting cat

Once everyone has finished their stories, share and discuss them.

#### Aims:

- Imagination: Creating scenes and stories, imagining places they've never been.
- Literacy: Practising writing stories, sentence structure, paragraphs, past, present and future tense and thinking about grammar.
- Communication: Explaining and describing objects and scenes and why they are noisy/wet/soft and so on.