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Handy Boxes



Helping Children Achieve in school

What is a Handy Box?

Handy Boxes were created by the Occupational Therapy (OT) Team. The aim was for schools to purchase a toolkit of small aids which they would keep together in a Handy Box. In this way schools would have a box of readily available resources on hand that they could trial to help children to be more independent and enhance their ability to access the curriculum.



Why are Handy Boxes beneficial?

Items are more easily accessible as there is no need for an OT referral, this benefits children and staff. Teaching staff can simply choose an item from the box and try it with a child who is struggling with a particular activity. Where there are ongoing or more complex concerns a referral to OT can be made.

What should a Handy Box contain?

Boxes should contain items that can support children who struggle with specific tasks with the aim of making the tasks slightly easier. The items should be age appropriate to your specific classroom. This leaflet has some ideas of items your Handy Box could contain.

Items for the Classroom

A variety of pencil grips

Try different pencil grips with those children who struggle to hold a pencil effectively

Ergonomic pens and Chunky Triangular Pencils

Easier to grasp than standard writing tools.

Adapted Scissors

- Easi-grip scissors – lightweight self-opening scissors. Useful for children with weak hands.

- Long loop scissors – extended loop gives the child increased strength and control over the cutting action.
- Sprung scissors - easier to open and close.

Adapted ruler

A handle on top of the ruler makes it easier to hold.

Lunchtime

Ergonomic Cutlery

Chunky moulded handles make this cutlery easier to grasp than standard cutlery. The moulded shape encourages correct finger positioning when cutting food. Spoon is useful when encouraging independent feeding initially.

Plate Guard

Makes it easier to scoop food from the plate and reduces spillages. Enables independent feeding with one hand.

Sensory

Chewy Tubes

These provide sensory input for children who chew items. There are a wide variety of textures and levels of resistance available. When choosing which tube to use with a child consider what items they are drawn to in terms of texture and firmness e.g. Sucks/chews clothing – issue low resistance smooth chewy. Chews/bites table, chair or other firm items – choose high resistance chewy with textured surface.



Vibrating Snake/Bug Massager

Vibration can be calming and help some children to focus and learn. For passive children, vibration may help alertness and readiness to engage. Vibration can also be used as an alternative to sensory seeking behaviours such as teeth grinding, ear flicking, and hand flapping.



Koosh Ball

Can be used with children who seek a range of sensory input including touch, smell, sound, vision. For children who pull at their hair it can be offered as an alternative. It can be a useful fidget tool for those who like something in their hands to aid concentration. Can be used to play catch.



Fidget toys

Offer these to children who need something to fidget with to help them focus on tasks. Use as a distraction tool to relieve stress and frustration and help children to relax. Can be used to strengthen fingers and warm up the hands before writing or other fine motor tasks.



Other

Dycem Non - Slip Roll

Place beneath items to reduce movement and increase control e.g. underneath a plate when eating, underneath a book when writing, beneath items on a tray, on a seat to stop a child sliding forwards. Cut to desired size. Provides grip on both sides. Can be cleaned with soap and water.

Easy Grip Tubing

Place onto items to make them easier to hold e.g. pens, cutlery. Comes in two different sizes.

Next steps:

If you would like to create a Handy Box for your class or school begin by collecting items for the box. You can use the information in this leaflet to help you or contact Caerphilly Children's Centre OT Team for a full list of suppliers.

Once you have put your box together you can contact us at Caerphilly Children's Centre and we can arrange training for school staff on how to use the items effectively with children.

Good luck with developing your Handy Box!



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**"This document is available in Welsh /
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg".**