

SENCO Conference: Practical science and assessment principles for pupils with SEN

Activity 1: Freaky Hand

You will need: Disposable glove, coloured beaker, vinegar (in beaker) and some bicarbonate of soda (in white pot – either 1, 2, 3 or 4 teaspoons).

Shake bicarbonate of soda into your disposable glove. Without tipping it into the vinegar, ease the wrist of the glove over the lip of the beaker, ensuring a tight fit with an elastic band. Lift the glove and shake the bicarbonate of soda into the beaker. Observe what happens.

How does the number of spoonfuls affect how quickly the glove inflates? Try it out, collect results and compare.

Alternatively, use a balloon

- Make a prediction: By using more bicarbonate of soda, will you get a bigger balloon?
- Once the balloon is inflated, take a piece of string (or paper tape), measure the largest circumference of the balloon and cut it. Lay the pieces of string/tape on a table and create a physical bar chart.

Activity 2: Sort it!

You will need: A selection of sheet materials, with contrasting textures. Observe carefully, compare and contrast the sheet materials. Use sense of touch as well as sight to explore them.

Group and sort in a variety of ways (could use hoops / sorting rings back in the classroom) e.g. Smooth – not smooth; Shiny – not shiny; Rough – not rough; Soft – not soft

Establish criteria for sorting, e.g. 'these are all...smooth, shiny, rough, soft'

Re-organise e.g. from shiniest to dullest, thickest to thinnest, and...

Activity 3: Materials dominoes

You will need: A variety of familiar objects, e.g. box of toys, kitchen equipment.

Explore your object using sense of touch as well as sight.

Discuss: What do we know about our object? What is it made of? What is it used for? Which properties make it fit for specific purposes?

On carpet. Begin with your object. 'My object is hard. Tell me about yours...' The child/children match to hard with their object and add a new word, which can be teacher-scribed on a post-it or use ready printed vocabulary flash cards.

Activity 4: Rainbow Skittles

You will need: Plastic plate, Skittles of different colour (in beaker), water

Arrange your Skittle sweets in a geometric pattern at the centre of your plate, no more than 1mm between sweets – not touching! Add water – carefully – to fill the plate and reach about half way up sweets.

Discuss: What might children notice? What changes take place? What observations might they make? What questions and ideas might children have?

Creating a simple floor book

Our umbrella question <i>What happens when we add water to our Skittles?</i>	What we did	What we did	Our observations
Our observations	Our questions	Our questions	What we found out

Activity 5: What will happen if our Gingerbread man gets wet?

You will need: Gingerbread man, plastic bowl, plate, water.

Fill the bowl half way with water. Observe what happens as the Gingerbread man dips his toes – and more – into the water!

How long does it take for him to fall apart?

How could we help the Gingerbread Man to cross the river (so that he doesn't have to ride on the fox's back)?