Newlife
Changing lives of disabled children

SENSORY ADVENTURE

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE TOYS IN YOUR PLAY POD

Ideas for playing together

1

Watch and follow
Place the tumbler where your child can see it clearly and gently turn the wheel.

You could say:
"Can you watch the beads move?"
"Where did they go?"

2

Spin and stop
Take turns spinning the tumbler, then wait for the beads to slow down or stop.

You could say:
"Ready, steady, spin!"
"Shall we stop and watch?"

3

Colour spotting
Look for favourite colours as the beads move around inside the tumbler.

You could say:
"Can you see red?"
"Which colour is your favourite?"

4

Sensory Break
Use the tumbler as a short break during sensory sessions or transitions during activities.

Find online:
Search the code **6TBLS** on **specialneedstoys.com**

SPECTRUM TUMBLER

What is this toy?

The Spectrum Tumbler is a bright and colourful spinning wheel filled with lively beads behind a clear acrylic screen. When your child turns the wheel, the beads tumble and dance, creating gentle sounds and eye-catching movement.

How this toy can help your child

- **Using little hands (fine motor skills)**
  Turning the wheel helps your child practise reaching, holding and moving their hand, palm or forearm. These are fine motor skills, which help with everyday activities like feeding, drawing and playing.
- **Watching movement (visual tracking)**
  Watching the colourful beads tumble and move helps your child practise following movement with their eyes. This is called visual tracking, which supports focus and attention.
- **Feeling calm and settled (sensory regulation)**
  The gentle colours, sound and movement can give your child calming sensory input. This may help them feel more settled during quiet time or when they need a short sensory break.
- **Learning what happens next (cause and effect)**
  Your child can learn that when they turn the wheel, the beads move. This is called cause and effect, which means learning that one action can make something else happen.

Extra support if your child needs it

- Use simple words, pictures, or cards such as "spin", "stop", "fast", "slow" and "again" to help your child communicate.
- If your child has reduced grip strength or limited movement, place the tumbler at a comfortable height and let them use their hand, palm, forearm or supported movement to turn it.

TEXTURES MAT

What is this toy?

The Textures Mat is a colourful, lightweight multi-sensory blanket made from six different fabrics in a fun patchwork design. Some panels make a gentle crunchy sound when squeezed, adding even more sensory discovery through touch and sound.

Dimensions: 18'' H x 29'' L

How this toy can help your child

- **Using little hands (fine motor skills)**
  Your child can squeeze, pat, rub and grab the different fabric sections. These movements help build fine motor skills, which support everyday activities like feeding, dressing, drawing and playing.
- **Exploring how things feel (sensory skills)**
  The different fabrics give your child lots of textures to explore. This supports tactile sensory skills, which means learning through touch.
- **Feeling calm and settled (sensory regulation)**
  The soft textures and gentle crunchy sounds can offer predictable sensory input. This may help your child feel calm, comforted and more settled during quiet time.

Extra support if your child needs it

- If your child is unsure about new textures, let them explore slowly through socks, sleeves or a soft cloth first.
- Use simple words, pictures, or cards such as "soft", "crunchy", "smooth", "more" and "stop" to help your child communicate.

Ideas for playing together

1

Texture talk
Explore the different fabric sections together and talk about how they feel.

You could say:
"Can you find something soft?"
"Which one makes a crunchy sound?"

2

Peek-a-boo
Hold up the corners of the mat and reveal your face or a favourite toy.

This can support shared attention, turn-taking and early social play.

3

Sensory story
Use the mat as a backdrop for a simple sensory story. The crunchy sound could be leaves rustling, footsteps, animal movements or weather sounds.

Find online:
Search the code **9KTXM** on **specialneedstoys.com**

Find online: Search the code **5VBAL** on **specialneedstoys.com**

VIBRATING BALL

Ideas for playing together

1

Roll and feel
Turn on the vibration and slowly roll the ball across a mat, tray or floor.

Your child can explore using their hands, feet, elbows or another comfortable body part.

2

Calming hold
Offer the ball during quiet time and let your child hold it, rest against it or place it near their hands or feet.

Start with the lowest vibration level and watch how your child responds.

The vibration level can be adjusted depending on what feels most comfortable.

What is this toy?

The Vibrating Ball is made from textured silicone rubber and has a built-in rechargeable battery. With three vibration levels and an automatic switch-off after around 15 minutes, it offers a playful sensory experience that can be used for calming, body awareness and engaging exploration during play or therapy.

How this toy can help your child

- **Using little hands (fine motor skills)**
  Holding, pressing, rolling and adjusting the ball helps your child practise grip strength and hand control. These are fine motor skills, which support everyday activities like feeding, drawing and playing.
- **Knowing where their body is (body awareness/ vibrotactile input)**
  The gentle vibration provides vibrotactile input, helping your child become more aware of different parts of their body, such as their hands, feet, arms and legs. This supports body awareness, understanding where the body is and how it moves. It may also support proprioceptive experiences that help with movement and body control.
- **Feeling calm and settled (sensory regulation)**
  The steady vibration can feel soothing for some children. It may help during transitions, calming breaks or moments when your child feels overwhelmed.

Extra support if your child needs it

- Use simple words, pictures, or cards such as “on”, “off”, “fast”, “slow”, “hold” and “stop” to help your child communicate.
- If your child is sensitive to vibration, begin with short sessions on the lowest setting and let them stop at any time.

SOUND BANK

What is this toy?

This fun sound bank and mirror recorder lets you record and play back up to 30 seconds of sound or messages. With three volume levels, a recording lock and a clear cover for adding a picture or visual prompt, it's a playful way to bring sounds, voices and everyday routines to life.

How this toy can help your child

- **Learning new words (language skills)**
  Recording familiar words, sounds or short phrases helps your child hear and practise communication. This supports language development.
- **Learning what happens next (cause and effect)**
  When your child presses the button, they hear a recorded voice or sound. This helps them learn that their action can make something happen.
- **Listening carefully (auditory awareness)**
  Your child can listen to voices, sounds and speech patterns. This supports auditory awareness, which means noticing and understanding sounds.

Extra support if your child needs it

- Use pictures, objects or symbols in the clear cover to help your child understand what the recording means.
- Use alongside your child's usual communication tools, such as visual cards, PECS or AAC, if they use them.

Ideas for playing together

1

Message button
Record a short message for your child to hear, such as "hello", "snack time", "tidy up" or "play time".

Let your child press the button to hear the message:
"It's now playtime."

This supports independence.

2

Copy the sound
Record a simple sound, word or phrase and encourage your child to copy it in their own way.

3

Pass the message
In a group, take turns recording a word, phrase or sound. Others can listen, copy or respond.

Find online:
Search the code **3SBPM** on **specialneedstoys.com**

AQUARI-ROUND SWITCH ADAPTED

What is this toy?

This switch-adapted visual sensory toy features a glowing rotating undersea scene behind a textured surface. When switched on, the internal lights bring the colours and movement to life, creating a soothing, captivating ocean display that children can enjoy in an accessible way.

How this toy can help your child

- **Watching movement (visual tracking)**
  The gentle rotating undersea scene encourages your child to watch and follow movement with their eyes. This supports visual tracking, focus and attention.
- **Learning what happens next (cause and effect)**
  If your child uses a switch, they can learn that pressing the switch makes the light and movement start. This is called cause and effect, which means learning that one action can make something else happen.
- **Making choices (communication skills)**
  Choosing when to start, stop or look again can help your child communicate what they want. This supports early choice-making and gives your child more control during play.
- **Feeling calm and settled (sensory regulation)**
  The soft lights, slow movement and ocean scene can feel calming. This may help your child settle during quiet time, transitions, or when they need a gentle sensory activity.

Find online:
Search the code **3AQRD** on **specialneedstoys.com**

Ideas for playing together

1

Watch the fish

Encourage your child to watch the undersea scene as it moves. You could choose one fish or shape to follow for a short time.

You could say:
"Can you see the fish moving?"
"Where is it going?"

2

Press and pause

If your child uses a switch, encourage them to press it to start the lights and movement. Pause and give them time to notice what happened.

You could say
"press", "on", "again" or "stop" to help build understanding and communication.

3

Undersea story

Use the ocean scene to make up a simple story together. The fish could swim slowly, hide behind seaweed or go on an undersea adventure.

4

Colour spotting

Use coloured cards, objects, or simple words to look for colours in the undersea scene.

You could say:
"Can you find blue?"
"Which colour do you like?"

USEFUL RESOURCES

PECS UK - Specific information and resources for the Picture Exchange Communication System
www.pecs-unitedkingdom.com/pecs

PECS UK (Free Materials) - Practical / free PECS resources that families can use alongside play and communication activities
www.pecs-unitedkingdom.com/free-materials

Communication Matters - Broader information and support around AAC, including finding appropriate AAC assessments / services
www.communicationmatters.org.uk/about-aac-systems

Ace Centre - Information, advice and support around assistive technology and AAC, including practical guidance for families and professionals
www.acecentre.org.uk/services/advice-information

Makaton - Free resources using signs, symbols and speech to support communication, language development and understanding in everyday activities
www.makaton.org/TMC/TMC/Resources/Free_resources_.aspx

Scope Communication Aids & AAC - Family friendly AAC explanation and different communication methods
www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/communication-aids-and-aac

Autism Central NHS (Sensory Differences) - Understanding sensory needs
www.autismcentral.nhs.uk/guidance/sensory-differences

National Autistic Society (Sensory Processing) - Information about sensory processing, sensory overload, support strategies and professional support
www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/about-autism/sensory-processing

Scope (Inclusive Play) - Wider accessible and inclusive playgrounds
www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/lets-play-fair-16ef55/playground-accessibility-map

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Need support?

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newlifecharity.co.uk/support

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