

# Treasure Trail

A “Hands - On” experience for preschool children with vision impairment.

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# Background

- A variety of Short Courses on a range of topics were offered at SASVI in 2012.
- Early Intervention focus - "hands-on" multisensory experience.

# Criteria for selection

## **Targeted children:**

- Blind or legally blind children
- Six children in each session
- Aged between 3.5 - 4.5 years

## **Targeted adults:**

- Parents / Caregivers
- Teachers / ECW personnel from preschools.

# Planning and Set Up

- Venue - SASVI
- Six sensory stations
- 10 minutes at each station
- Each Advisory Teacher worked with one of the children and the accompanying adults
- The family and teaching personnel were encouraged to observe, interact and take photos
- The Short Course was offered on two occasions

# Partnerships

- "Learning outcomes are most likely to be achieved when early childhood educators work in partnership with families." *Belonging, Being & Becoming. The Early Years Learning Framework (2009), p.12*
- "Educators recognise that families are children's first and most influential teachers." *EYLF, p.12*
- Partnerships involve educators, families and professionals "...working together to explore the learning potential in everyday events, routines and play so that children with additional needs are provided with daily opportunities to learn from active participation and engagement in these experiences" at home and educational settings. *EYLF, p12.*

# Intentional Teaching

- “Intentional teaching involves educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and action.” *EYLF, p.15*
- Educators recognise that “learning occurs in social contexts and that interactions and conversations are vitally important for learning.” *EYLF, p.15*
- Educators use “strategies such as modelling and demonstrating, open questioning, speculating, explaining, engaging in shared thinking and problem solving to extend children’s thinking and learning.” *EYLF, p.15*

# Further planning and consideration

- Sharing information with colleagues and reflecting on the children's skills and needs
- Providing a take home booklet for parents and staff
- Providing a non-threatening informal environment
- Encouraging interaction
- Using appropriate language for concept development
- Discussing teaching strategies
- Highlighting the need to provide extra time for exploration, performing tasks and responding

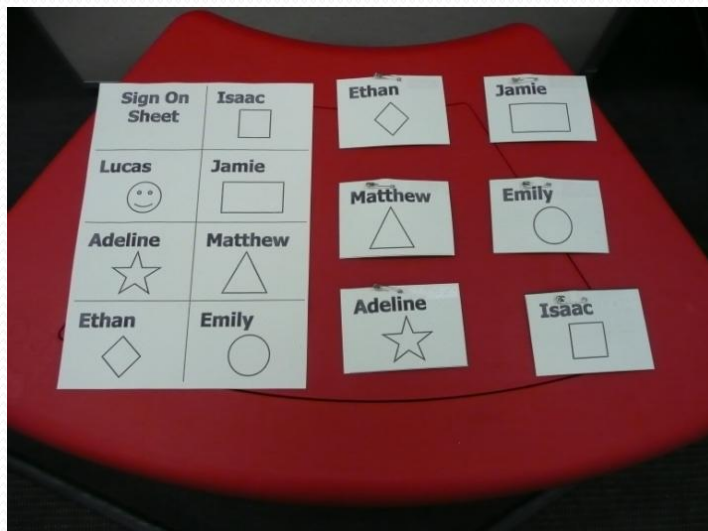
# Objectives

- Encourage exploration of the activities using one /both hands
- Develop “good looking behaviour” (functional vision)
- Encourage use of other senses (multisensory approach)
- Foster independence
- Encourage mobility, trailing and gross motor skills
- Demonstrate appropriate use of play materials and equipment
- Encourage social interaction with peers and adults
- Have fun
- Model good practice

# On the day

- Signing in and receiving their card
- Introductions
- Songs and sharing information
- Introducing a new song and 'treasure' concept
- Finding their own starting stations
- Moving around the stations and completing their card
- Farewells and discussions

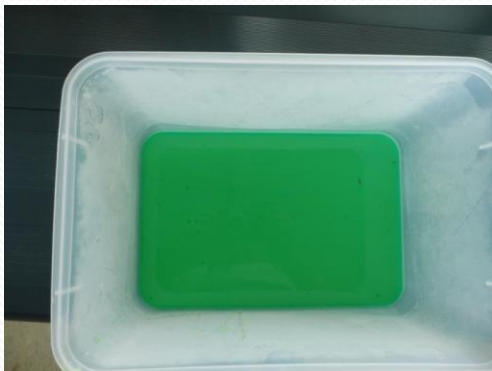
# The Arrival



# The Set Up



# The Sensory Table



# Underwater Treasures





# The Treasure Cave



# The Tunnel



# The Balancing Treasures and The Secret Room



# Group Times

## Set up

- Introductions, singing songs, finger plays.
- Ball games and learning names
- Introduce 'treasure' concept and new rhyme
- The session ended with farewells /songs/feedback from parents.

## Focus

- Encourage listening skills
- Foster interactions and turn taking
- Promote communication
- Verbalise and discuss experiences of the day

# Sensory Table

Set up:

- Five containers of tactile materials to explore
- Hidden 'treasures'
- Smocks to protect clothing

Focus:

- Encourage tactile exploration
- Model co-active approach
- Encourage independence
- Follow instructions to locate the items on the table
- Discuss and describe the experiences using specific language
- Develop concepts (eg: heavy/light, prickly/ tickly soft/ hard rough/smooth, etc.)

# Underwater Treasures

Set up:

- Water tray with a variety of items to use - included floating and sinking items, spray bottles, funnels, syringes, water wheel, brightly coloured objects hidden inside the blocks of ice
- Variety of containers for filling and pouring

Focus:

- Provide a non - threatening experience
- Learn how to use play equipment / utensils for exploration and discovery
- Model turn taking and sharing
- Develop concepts associated with water play (sound, temperature, capacity)

# Balancing Treasures

Set up:

- Children engaged in this gross motor activity as they moved from outdoor to indoor activities
- Stepping stones and a large coloured foam cylinder.

Focus:

- A fun non-threatening activity for parents and children to share
- Explore different ways of moving and balancing
- Interaction and communication

# Hanging Treasures

Set up:

- Children located their named hanging treasure on the wall and used scissors to cut the string
- Unwrapped the six layers to discover a surprise inside. The layers were: corrugated cardboard, cellophane, embossed paper, bubble wrap, tissue paper, gold wrapping paper.

Focus:

- Develop hand skills (both hands to scan and locate the parcel, use the scissors grip, fingers and wrist movement to unwrap the parcel)
- Develop tactile skills by feeling different layers of materials and identify the materials used
- Develop concepts and vocabulary associated with labelling the different materials used

# The Treasure Cave

Set up:

- Tent set up as the treasure cave
- Items to locate inside and outside included: shells, sticks, small branches and leaves in containers, marbles and pebbles hidden in artificial grass.
- Encouraged explorations outside / inside of the cave

Focus:

- Following instructions and locating items
- Develop sensory skills (particularly tactile, auditory and olfactory)
- Expand vocabulary related to the textures (fluffy, soft, smooth, hard)
- Explore concepts related to mobility and spatial knowledge including maths concepts

# Treasure Tunnels

Set up:

- Two tunnels, one dark inside
- Equipment strategically placed for children to discover (torches, musical instruments)

Focus:

- Mobility skills - navigating through tunnels, locating and exploring items
- Hand skills - using both hands to manipulate the instruments and to operate the torches
- Exploring rhythms and songs using the instruments
- Expanding the vocabulary and learning new concepts related to sounds

# The Secret Room

Set up:

- A treasure chest filled with polystyrene foam.
- Hidden treasures to locate, manipulate and explore their tactile, visual and auditory characteristics

Focus:

- Hand skills
- Language concepts - predicting what it might be, describing objects by look, touch and function.
- Interaction and communication

# Outcomes / Benefits

Highlighted to parents and educators:

- The importance of using consistent language
- Use of language to clarify concepts (verbalise, describe, comment, constant use of language)
- How modelling can assist learning
- The value of using a multisensory approach as well as residual vision to develop sound concepts
- The importance of hand / tactile skills development
- The value of using a co-active approach
- Some skills are best taught one-to-one - intentional teaching
- The need for additional time for processing and responding

# Other feedback

- Parents realised the purpose behind the activities because of the modelling and information in the booklet.
- Some staff took the ideas back to their kindergartens and ran similar sensory programs.
- Advisory Teachers were able to observe the skills of children they supported and could share the conversations with the staff from sites.
- Being able to observe the children's current skills and plan for their future learning.
- Opportunity to see the SASVI site for the families and staff.
- Opportunity to meet other children and their families.
- Opportunity to share the information about the children and their skills.

# Outcomes for children

- Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity
  - They felt safe, secure and supported in a non-threatening environment
- Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing (social, emotional and physical)
  - They made choices, took risks, shared sensory, fine and gross motor experiences, showed enjoyment, asserted their capabilities and independence.
- Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators
  - They expressed ideas and engaged in enjoyable interactions using non-verbal and verbal communications and language. Outcomes listed in *Belonging, Being and Becoming. EYLF.*

# References

1. Australian Government of Education (2009). *Belonging, Being & Becoming. The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.*
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Thank you for listening  
Good bye

