

Adapting Arts Materials for People With Disabilities

For People with Limited Dexterity and Other Physical Disabilities:

Use **house painting brushes**, foam wedges,
roll-on applicators and squeeze bottles

Adapt paint brushes by **slipping foam hair
curlers over the handles** or build up the grip
with **sports tape**

Use homemade or purchased **headgear**
to hold tools.

Attach a **rubber spatula** to the end of a brush to create a **comfortable mouth painting tool**.

Construct a **cuff that can fasten a brush** or tool to the hand.

Use fingers and hands directly, rather than or in addition to adapted brushes.

Use **thick drawing tools**, adapting as in above.

Use **hand rollers or rolling pins** to flatten **clay**.

You can get **adaptive squeeze scissors** called “spring scissors” as well as custom scissors with large loops for one- or two-handed cutting and spring action.

Use **stamps and cookie cutters** that have **grips** so they’re easy to grasp.

Make or purchase **wheelchair easels or lap trays**.

These may include Velcro scoot guards, pouches for supplies.

Printmaking tools can be adapted by **adding knobs** or handles.

Use pie plates for paint stabilized on a table by taping the pan to the table with heavy-duty tape.

Offer a variety of **fastening materials** for **collages**.

Dance: upper body, arms and hands can do **alternative versions of any movements** that legs can do; **heads** can also move, as can **eyebrows, lips**.

Use **musical instruments** that can be played with **one hand or little movement**. **Wrist bells** work for people who have trouble grasping.

Attach bells to wheels of wheelchairs or scooters.

Attach rain sticks to limbs with a Velcro strap.

Add extra support to **drumsticks** by **strapping them onto** arms with Velcro.

For People who are **Deaf** or have **Hearing Impairments.**

Include **visual props and cues.**

Face people when you are talking.

Invite people to **feel vibrations.**

Write out words related to activity, instructions, post **large enough for everyone** to see.

Avoid dimming lights that might inhibit the use of vision.

For **People with chemical sensitivities**

Avoid using aerosol sprays, latex gloves.

Ask about sensitivities to glue, markers, starch, tempera paint, **anything with an odor.**

For **People with Blindness or Low Vision**

Gel paint provides **tactile definition.**

Add sand to tempera. Use **high contrast** paper and materials, especially black and white. Try sparkling or shiny paper, **bold colors.**

Use **collage materials** that **make a textured surface:** scrunched tissue paper, fabric, cotton balls.

Place paper inside a tray with raised edges to help define the boundaries.

Notch paper in one corner to designate the top and the bottom.

Set up or line up materials in **open containers** or trays.

Tell people **which** material is **first, second, third.**

Use textured tape to mark performance spaces.

Attach a **string or rope to opposite walls of a room** for people can use as a guide in movement classes.

For **People with Cognitive Disabilities**

Set out materials clearly. If there is an **order** for use of materials, make that obvious.

Give **instructions one step at a time.** Check for comprehension **before** moving on.

Demonstrate movements. **Build sequences** gradually.

Offer alternative means of making choices, verbally, by pointing, nodding, clapping, etc.