

# Indoor Play Activities

## INDOOR PLAY ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN WITH MDVI

### Let's have fun through play

All children love to play. The need to play is just as strong in children with multiple disabilities and vision impairment (MDVI) as in any other child. However, many families of children with MDVI often find that it's a challenge to involve their children in play activities either with other children or by themselves.

Children with MDVI need a lot of encouragement and support to participate in play activities. Engaging the child with MDVI in a play activity is a great way to encourage the child to socialize with other children and adults and to encourage them to express their emotions. They can also learn various concepts ranging from taking turns as they play, understanding different textures, shapes and skills such as using hands to explore and manipulate objects and most importantly have fun!

Being imaginative and creative with play is particularly important for children with MDVI. Here are some simple activities at home which can be both fun and learning for children with MDVI.

### *Find the hidden objects/toys:*

Any kind of flour (corn flour, wheat flour, rice flour) could be used in different bowls/buckets/tubs. You can hide different objects (small toys the child plays with) in the flour and encourage the child to use his hands and feet to search for the objects hidden in the flour. If toys are not available, other items easily available at home such as small bowls, small plates and spoons could be used to encourage the child to explore as much as possible. Large spoons for stirring, bowls to scoop, funnels/sieve to play with the flour are also great ways to encourage the child to learn different skills using both his hands and also a great way to experience different textures, sounds and sensations.



Different grains such as rice, wheat or different lentils (rajma, chana, moong, chana dal) can also be used. Based on the child's preference you could select the flour/grain/lentils and occasionally keep changing the grain/lentil/flour to give the child a variety and maintain his interest in the activity.

As parents and caregivers play together with the child he will also learn different ways to ask for help, ask for more, or to let you know when he wants to be done with the activity.

Please remember to keep a soft cloth and water ready for clean up. The soft cloth can be used by the child for wiping his hands as required during the activity.



Sometimes, the child may not like to touch the flour/grains with their hands and fingers. Initially, he could also use a spoon to participate in the activity. Providing hand under hand support (child's hand over the parents' hand) to the child may also be helpful as you touch the grains/flour together with your hand gently guiding the child's hand to touch and explore. Turn taking could be encouraged as you play together and take turns digging deep in the lentils to feel the texture on the hands and listening to the sound as you scoop and pour the lentils in the utensil.

While selecting the objects, please remember to begin with objects that are familiar to the child and toys which the child likes to play with.

### ***Water play:***

Many children with MDVI love water. Water play is a great activity that encourages children to learn different skills such as pouring, squeezing, stirring and scrubbing. Many children simply love running their hands through water as this is very relaxing for them and some love the actions of splashing and pouring. A small tub/bucket/bowl/small individual container can be used for water play.





Gradually, different things could be added to water such as shampoo/rose water which helps children with MDVI widen their sensory experiences as they put their hands in different textures and different temperatures (warm or cold water). Various water toys, sponges, strainers, sieve, small cups, small steel glasses, bowls, small bottles could be used for water play. Parents and caregivers could play together doing simple actions such as encouraging the child to pour water on your hands and you pouring water on his hands.

This is a great activity where his siblings can also join him and as they play together the child with MDVI would naturally learn to take turns with his siblings and also have fun together as they splash and explore.

Some children with MDVI put their hands in the mouth frequently. Sometimes, this is a way the child wants to experience what he touches through his different senses. Food colour could also be used in such cases, if it is easily available at home. (At times adding some cardamom/cinnamon powder can also add an element of smell, a different texture and is harmless for the child).



***Some additional indoor play activities:***

There are several other activities which can be both play and learning for the child with MDVI.

If the child is mostly in a lying down position at home, hanging interesting objects/ toys near his hands/ feet and showing him how to reach out and touch, shake, play with them is also a great way to engage the child as you play together.

Some simple games involving the child and his siblings such as 'passing the ball/object' may be interesting for the child.

If there are no toys available, several children love playing with small steel bowls/glasses in the house. Simple activities of stacking these in different ways can be great ways to encourage the child to play with his siblings.



### Please remember:

- If touching wet textures is too stressful for the child it is helpful to begin with dry textures.
- It is better to avoid objects that have sharp edges or that might break or rust.
- All of us have preferences and so do children with MDVI. Some people love the feel of velvet, others hate it. Please remember to respect the child's preferences.
- It is helpful to provide the necessary support to the child, which may range from hand over hand, hand under hand and sometimes support at the wrist.
- Some children may also love playing with objects such as a piece of paper or a shiny object. The child could play with these when he is by himself and occasionally you could play together.
- It is important to give children with MDVI repeated experiences with the same activities. It is these repeated experiences that help children learn.
- If you can make play as fun and enjoyable as possible, the child will probably want to do it again.
- Involving siblings in all play activities is a great way for children to learn to play with other children.

- Each child is different and some children may require additional time to touch, explore and perform different actions with the objects.
- Involve the child in cleaning up after the activity as a learning experience and also to let him know the end of the activity.
- Most importantly, the child should enjoy what he is doing. The ultimate goal is the child should have fun!