

Tactile Schedules and Learning Aids

Purpose

Tactile schedules and learning aids provide accessible, multi-sensory ways for students with disabilities—particularly those with vision impairment, autism, or communication challenges—to understand routines, transitions, and learning concepts. These supports reduce anxiety, promote independence, and increase engagement.

Students Who Benefit

- Tactile supports are particularly useful for students who:
- Are blind or have low vision.
- Have autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Are non-verbal or minimally verbal.
- Experience sensory processing difficulties.
- Have cognitive impairments or developmental delays.
- Benefit from concrete, hands-on learning experiences.

How to Make Tactile Schedules

Materials You'll Need:

- Cardboard or foam board base.
- Velcro dots or strips.
- Real objects, miniatures, or textured symbols.
- Braille labels (if appropriate).
- Large print and tactile symbols (e.g., from laminating puff paint or using textured tape).

Steps to Create:

- Identify the Routine
- Break the day into segments—e.g., “Toileting”, “Morning Circle”, “Outdoor Play”.
- Match Each Step to a Tactile Object
- Example: Mini toilet lid = toileting
- Piece of artificial grass = outdoor play
- Textured book spine = reading time
- Arrange Left to Right (or Top to Bottom)
- This aligns with common sequencing and literacy development.
- Attach with Velcro
- Items can be removed and replaced to accommodate changes or student choice.
- Add Braille or Bold Text Labels
- Use high-contrast colours or embossed text depending on the student's needs.
- Make it portable, use a binder, ring, or lanyard to keep the schedule mobile if necessary.

How to Make Tactile Learning Aids

Tactile learning aids supplement instruction in literacy, numeracy, and other content areas.

Examples:

Concept	Tactile Aid	Description
Alphabet	Sandpaper letters	Traced by fingers to build motor memory
Counting	Beads on a string, egg carton counters	Tactile and visual aid to support number concepts
Shapes	Foam cut-outs with textured surfaces	Helps identify shapes by touch
Storytelling	Tactile storyboards	Include fur, leather, felt to match characters/objects
Science	3D models of animals, plants	Multisensory learning for concept development

Using Tactile Supports Effectively

- Introduce each item one-on-one first.
- Reinforce daily through consistent use.
- Pair with verbal/visual prompts.
- Allow students to manipulate the items.
- Track student response and adapt over time.

Tactile Schedule Quick Guide

Routine	Symbol	Location
Toileting	 Mini toilet seat	Bathroom door
Morning Circle	 Textured bell	Classroom wall
Reading Time	 Braille-text page	Reading nook
Snack	 Plastic apple	Kitchen bench
Outdoor Play	 Artificial grass patch	Exit door

✓ Use real objects or tactile symbols

✓ Mount securely with Velcro

✓ Label with print + braille if needed

✓ Check and clean weekly

“Touch to Learn. Touch to Understand. Touch to Grow.”

Staff may source symbols from:

- Tactile Graphics Australia
- Paths to Literacy – APH Tactile Image Library
- Twinkl tactile resources
- Custom-made items via Cricut or 3D printing