



DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

BEST PRACTICES AND RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUAL & GROUP LEISURE ACTIVITIES DURING THE COVID 19 EMERGENCY

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Members' community activities have been restricted as necessitated by COVID-19 safety guidelines making it more important than ever that there are safe scheduled indoors & outdoors activities. The following guide is intended to provide ideas for how to prepare, structure and implement activities.

It is a difficult task to develop and implement leisure activities for members every day so it is recommended that vendors designate staff to be responsible for developing and replenishing the needed materials. A designated shift lead should ensure activities are being offered according to the daily activity schedule. Staff should offer 1-2 short activities in the mornings and 2-3 activities in the afternoon/evenings.

Components to ensure the Vendor is ready to provide daily activities include:

1. Creating and posting a daily schedule
2. Storing materials that support members' preferences & sensory needs
3. Materials Management

Daily Schedule

A daily and weekly schedule needs to be posted in the central part of the house for all to be able to review and plan. The schedule should be based on the members' individual & group preferences and include a list of sensory and activity preferences for each member. This enables the staff to develop activities which encompass the members' preferences.

Storing Materials that Support Members' Preferences & Sensory Needs

The Vendor should assess and document each member's preferences and sensory needs (if present) and have a centralized way to store and access materials in each home. An example might be:

Activity File Box: This refers to an easy way to store samples for each activity or project to be conducted.

- A laminated copy on regular size paper could be developed for each activity and filed in a small plastic file box with a handle, unless the activity is very easy to understand and can be duplicated.
- Each laminated activity could include- materials required, learning sequence based on developmental needs, teaching sequence if needed, & how to make the activity more diversified and complex as the member requires less assistance.
- Themes could be selected and presented for an entire week, such as "Desert Days" which

emphasizes the desert theme through activities, exploration in your own backyard, books and short videos about the desert. These activities can readily be scaled up or down to meet each member's developmental needs.

Materials Management: This refers to obtaining needed supplies, organizing the supplies and replenishing supplies. Materials Management should be assigned to designated staff member(s). Examples may include:

- One large clear plastic bin for each morning & afternoon/evening OR organized by types of activities.
- Ten-fourteen plastic bins should be assembled by the designated coordinating person OR one bin per category (e.g., music, crafts, games, cooking, exercise/yoga, sensory, gardening, etc.).
- These bins could be stored in a central closet arranged in an organized & easily visible manner. Generally, a hall coat closet works best. This makes materials readily accessible & encourages engagement.
- The cover of each bin could have the name of the activities, list of materials needed for each activity, and the steps of each activity clearly typed out on a piece of paper and firmly secured to the front side of the bin. More detailed descriptions for each activity, if needed, could be maintained in the Activity File Box.
- A model/sample of completed project(s) could be included in the bin on top of all needed materials.
- The designated staff coordinator could survey the bins each week and replenish supplies or add other activities based on members & staff input. Change is always good!

Best practices in activity planning should include the following to ensure increased quality engagement for both members & staff:

- Activities should be selected and prepared for ahead of time with needed materials.
- Introduce some form of variation in both schedule & activities.
- Use different parts of the house &/or yard to enhance interest and diversity. For example, conduct crafts projects at the dining room table, music time in the front room, develop separate sensory & exercise areas. Water play can be in one area of the yard, while gardening has distinct area with raised beds and ball play is elsewhere in the yard.
- Incorporate components of CARE & SHARE in a COLLABORATIVE MANNER. Members usually have the best experiences if staff are involved with them doing the same activity alongside them in an assistive way when needed.

Three central concepts could enhance the experience- 1) Practice "Three Parts To An Experience", 2) Make Memories, & 3) Establish sustainable long lasting interests. Start simply, progress forward with increased diversity and complexity of activity.

- Practice Three Parts To An Experience
 - Prepare & Plan the experience/activity
 - Actively conduct the activity
 - Clean-up & Review; this introduces responsibility & closure to the experience/activity
- Make Memories
 - Take pictures or videos of the activity

- Make Memory Books for members to recall
- Discuss what was fun & enjoyed
- Establish sustainable long lasting interests
 - Try to develop a hobby based on the member's preferences
 - Start a weekly "Club" such as a "take it apart-put it back together club. For example, take an old unused household appliance apart THEN reverse the sequence and put it back together. This can be done over a course of days or weeks as needed. Honest, some members will become intrigued and want to take apart other types of items in a planned way.

Ideas and Resources

Indoors

- Cooking
- Crafts
- Board games
- Sensory & sensory areas
- Exercise
- Yoga & Mindfulness
- Sky watch stars at night

Outdoors

- Walks with a theme (e.g., bugs, trees, flowers, cacti, sky/clouds, birds)
 - Focus on one item
 - Start with a very short walk, and SHAPE into longer times
 - Use CHAINING to add on additional steps to the walk as adventure
- Gardening
- Water play
- Construction area where simple tools can be safely used
- Ball games start with just rolling the ball or evolve into a cooperative ball game
- Throwing selected items into different areas of the yard to introduce sorting and intention

Name Game

Materials Needed: None.

Explain the rules- Let the group know that they are going to pretend they are going somewhere (i.e., on a camping trip, to a party, to work, etc.). The first person will say their name and something they would bring that to the imagined place.

For example, "My name is Mary and I am going to bring sandwiches for the picnic." Then the next person will say their name, what they are going to bring, and repeat back what the first person's name is and what they are going to bring.

For example, “My name is Matt and I’m going to bring a picnic blanket and Mary is going to bring sandwiches.” Go around in a circle and have every person state the names and items they will bring. The last person will have to state everyone’s name and item. Make sure to give behavior specific praise and encourage social interaction (For example: Matt , great job remembering Mary’s item! What kind of sandwiches do you think she should bring?)

Differentiation: *Have clients write down their answer beforehand to have a visual aid and have them go first in the game so that they don’t have to remember everyone’s names and items.*

Question Web

Materials Needed: Soft ball, pen/paper

Each person will have an opportunity to ask another person a question from a pre-determined list. The person who has the ball first will say another person’s name, throw them the ball and ask them to pick a number 1-22. That person will state their number and then the person who threw the ball will ask them a question.

1. Does your name have a special meaning or were you named after someone else?
2. If you had a time machine, what point in the future or in history would you visit?
3. What’s your favorite thing to do in the summer?
4. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
5. If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
6. If you had to change your name to something else, what would it be?
7. What book, movie or video have you seen/read recently you would recommend?
8. If you had to have a wild animal as a pet, what would it be?
9. What is your favorite movie?
10. If you could have any superpower, what would it be?
11. What school or work program do you go to?
12. Do you like cats or dogs better?
13. Do you like scary movies or funny movies better?
14. If you could go on vacation to Hawaii or Alaska, where would you go?
15. If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
16. What is your favorite color?
17. What is your favorite song?
18. If you had to have a wild animal as a pet, what would it be?
19. What is your favorite tv show?
20. What is your favorite food?

Conversation UNO

1. Explain how to play UNO for anyone who does not know. Deal 7 cards to each person from the deck. Explain the changes in conversation UNO: there are rules for each card you put

down. Prior to the first turn, select a topic. Make sure everyone is clear about the topic before starting and make sure the topic is broad (vacations, pets, etc.)

2. Explain the following:

- Whenever a player puts down a card of a *matching color* he/she makes a comment about the topic.
- When a player puts down a *matching number/symbol (reverse and skip cards)*, he/she asks a question of the next player regarding the topic.
- When a *Draw 2* is played, the player must answer a total of 2 questions about the topic from their peers (Could be yes/no or choices for clients with limited verbal).
- When a *Wild Card* or *Wild Draw 4 Card* is played, the player must change the topic.



Online Resources for Activities, Games, and Program Materials

- [The Home Teacher Activity Calendar](#)
- [Virtual Field Trip](#)
- [19 Things to do at Home](#)
- [Chesco Block Schedule Example](#)

Helpful Resources and Websites

- [Autism Speaks](#)
- [Autism Research Institute](#)
- [CDC Wash your Hands Posters](#)