

## Playing

Sighted hearing children develop through playing, learning and practising new skills and understanding. They repeat actions which have interesting results and gradually learn to plan an action to achieve a particular end. They learn to imitate and to use more and more different objects. They begin to play imaginatively. And they play with adults from the very beginning, developing relationships and learning to communicate.

Deafblind children need extra help throughout these stages. They may be unwilling or unable to explore their environment and interact with other people, through sight, hearing or touch (sometimes called 'tactile defensiveness').

### Approaches that may help

- Follow the [key approaches for deafblind children](#) - building trust, being consistent, helping understanding, taking time, following the child and being supportive
- Make sure your child is comfortably positioned and as relaxed as possible
- Develop turn-taking games. These can include action rhymes, cradling, rocking and bouncing games. They provide opportunities for stimulating the use of vision, use of hearing, and toleration of touch
- Offer play with food. Children who are developing normally will have lots of opportunities to experiment and play with their food. This is a precursor to interacting with other substances such as paint, playdough and clay. Deafblind children, in contrast, may require feeding by an adult. Playing with food substances, such as instant whip or custard, will allow your child to explore through vision, touch, smell and taste at their own pace. In this way, children can learn about the properties of substances and how they can change.
- Use a resonance board. This is an aid that feeds information back to your child through vibro-tactile means. Objects can be placed on the board around your child, who feels the effects of his or her own random movements on the objects through both touch and vibration.
- Choose toys that suit your child's needs. Plastic toys are not interesting if you cannot see the colours or hear the tunes they play. Everyday objects may be better than toys, but always check for safety. For example:
  - different types of brushes
  - textured fabrics
  - torches, preferably with different colours
  - foot spa

### Further information

Other suggestions can be found in

- [our equipment and accessibility pages for children](#)
- [Play Helps, and More Play Helps by Roma Lear](#)
- Making Sense Together by Rosalind Wyman (278 pages. Published in 2000 by Souvenir Press Ltd. ISBN: 0285635107). This book is available to be borrowed from our library. [Contact the library and information team](#) for more information.