

Educational Piece Team: Accommodation Kit

Authors:

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Purpose: In the United States, the National Center for Education Statistics (2024) reports that 15% of individuals, aged 3-21, are served within the public education system, which means 15% of youth have a disability that impacts their potential for success academically and in the workforce. This highlights the importance of addressing the needs of people with disabilities to provide access and promote belonging in programming while acknowledging the safety of participants. To address the need to build knowledge and awareness of disability in programming, trainings, materials, and programs have been developed to increase comfort, knowledge, and access to resources for professionals.

An Accommodation Kit includes materials and supplies to help youth during 4-H club programming. This kit supports 4-H program staff and volunteers in creating supportive learning environments where all youth can thrive, and to ensure 4-H staff and volunteers are equipped to provide some reasonable accommodations during club meetings, programs, workshops, events, and any gathering where young people and families are present. It includes materials that address tactile (fidgets), auditory (headphones), and visual (pictures) needs for learners.

Objectives: To provide materials to assist 4-H professionals and volunteers in their roles within their state.

Target Audience: Youth with disabilities participating in 4-H programs

Current population: N/A

Methods used: The University of Minnesota (D. Cole) created a first version with adaptation in for use in Florida. Resources include the experiences and background knowledge of both authors, as well as professional documents from disability organizations, universities, and other entities that service people with disabilities.

Impact results: Requests have been made by professionals and volunteers for access to materials and resources that increase their ability to serve youth with disabilities. This includes building awareness through trainings, which includes the presentation of utilizing Accommodation Kits, as well as other resources.

Over 150 participants have attended classes, webinars, lectures, and/or presentations since the inception of training programs focused on raising disability awareness and comfort levels of professionals when around people with disabilities. Trainings resulted in increased knowledge levels and comfort levels in participants (n=46) ranging from 24% (overall comfort level, overall knowledge level), 35% (knowledge level in making accommodations, knowledge level in communicating with caregivers, comfort level of documenting disability), and 43% (comfort level in making accommodations). Professionals are tasked with meeting the needs of youth with disabilities through proactive (planning before the program or activity) and reactive (addressing

needs during or after the program or activity) planning strategies. Disability awareness trainings improve these techniques and increase the knowledge and comfort level of professionals, especially when supplemented with materials.

Information on the role the applicant had in the entry: Darcy Cole and Vanessa Spero collaborate as co-chairs on the National AEBC Youth with Disabilities Champion Group. They have been working together since 2023 to address the needs of professionals across the country. Both Ms. Cole and Dr. Spero have personal and professional experience as caregivers and professionals in the area of disability. Together they have presented trainings to University of Wisconsin and Virginia on disability awareness. Ms. Cole created the original content and Dr. Spero worked with Ms. Cole to adapt the resource for use in Florida.

Publisher's requirements: The graphic was created using University of Florida approved software, all logos and statements are per University of Florida guidelines.

Production costs: Six kits were created, one for each Florida Extension District at a cost of \$750.00 in total. University of Minnesota received funding to have a kit for each of their counties (unknown amount).



Inclusive 4-H Accommodation Kits

This kit has been created to help strengthen our commitment to welcoming all youth – we cherish and value the diversity of humanity and believe in the power of ALL young people. 4-H strongly encourages you to utilize this kit to help foster inclusive spaces and provide simple accommodations for those engaged in our programs.

Purpose

- To support 4-H program staff and volunteers in creating inclusive, supportive learning environments where all youth can thrive
- To ensure 4-H staff and volunteers are equipped to provide simple reasonable accommodations during club meetings, programs, workshops, events and/or any gathering where young people and families are present

How to Use This Kit

It is recommended that all of the items in this kit are made readily accessible at 4-H activities. Place items on tables where people may sit or have items available at supply, check-in or registration tables.

Kit Contents

Sensory Fidgets

Sensory fidgets help people calm their mind, decrease stress, enhance learning, regulate their bodies and improve concentration, alertness and focus. They are also a way to increase tactile awareness and keep fidgeting fingers busy.

- **Fidgets:** Small objects or tools that provide an outlet for purposeful self-regulation activity with the hands.
- **Chair Bands:** If your space includes chairs, you can install these chair bands easily by stretching the rubber bounce band over the two front legs of a chair.
- **Pencil Toppers:** To use, mount fidgets on top of a pencil or pen. They are also helpful for people who may chew on the eraser part of pencils.

Fine Motor Supports

Fine motor skills involve the use of the smaller muscle of the hands, such as a writing exercise, art projects involving scissors/cutting, a sewing activity with clothing fasteners or buttons/thread, engineering and design challenges where youth are building something, in addition to others. In order to support learning and engagement in our clubs and programs, the following items below can be used to help alleviate challenges associated with fine-motor skills.

- **Pencil Grips:** Pencil grips are ergonomically designed and support comfort, relieve pressure and help youth correct writing posture. To use, slide onto the top part of a pencil or other writing utensil. These can also be placed on writing utensils prior to the start of the session.

- **Mounted Scissors:** Mounted scissors support control and strength and can be used by those with only one functional hand. Adult supervision is always encouraged.
- **Loop Scissors:** Loop scissors reduce the tension on hands and fingers and are suitable for youth who cut using either hand. The design will help support hand-eye coordination and fine-motor skills. Adult supervision is always encouraged.
- **Tri Grip Markers, Tri Write Pencils and Triangular Crayons:** These are designed in a triangular shape to guide proper writing grip. The shape also helps sliding and slipping off tables/other hard surfaces.
- **Grip Tape:** Wrap around pencils, utensils, paint brushes, tools, etc. to help people better grip and control items being used.
- **Shelf Liners:** Shelf liners support stability and can be cut and added to the bottom of items that slide easily, including but not limited to: rulers, clipboards, trays, etc.

Visual, Focus and Understanding Supports

The ways in which we learn are diverse so people often need support when it comes to focusing on and understanding the content that's being presented in our 4-H clubs and programs. Consider the ways in which the information is being presented - are there multiple ways people can engage in the learning? (i.e., written formats, audio formats, in a partner format, using drawings or illustrations, etc.)

- **Highlighters:** Highlighters are a great way to emphasize the importance of specific content, especially if what is being shared is lengthy. Highlight key words in directions and text. See the 4-H Pledge below as an example: "I pledge my **head** to **clearer thinking**, my **heart** to greater **loyalty**, my **hands** to larger **service**, and my **health** to **better living**, for my **club**, my **community**, my **country**, and my **world**."
- **Multi Sensory, Ruled Paper:** Supports written activities through both sight and touch. The raised lines give people extra-sensorial cues to guide them in letter formation, spacing and organization.
- **Chime:** The sound can support an individual to refocus and calm their body. It can also be used to get the attention of a group of people or to start a 4-H club meeting or program.
- **Timer:** Utilizing a timer during activities can help people visually understand the passage of time. The timer can help ease transitions, encourage independence and increase productivity.
- **Visual Schedules and Supports:** Visual schedules can reduce anxiety by helping people understand what will happen. They provide consistency, may reduce resistance to completing less than desirable activities, and help people follow the rules and plan for what they will encounter. Provided examples include: First, Then, Next Schedule and Daily Schedules

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Sensory Fidgets

Fidgets



Chair Bands



Pencil Toppers



Fine Motor Supports

Pencil Grips



Mounted Scissors



Loop Scissors



Tri Grip Markers



Tri Write Pencils



Triangular Crayons



Grip Tape



Shelf Liners

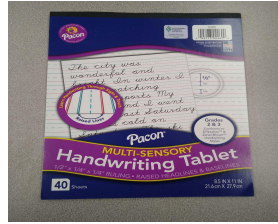


Visual, Focus and Understanding Supports

Highlighters



Multi Sensory, Ruled Paper



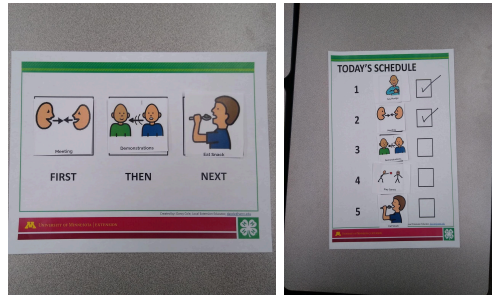
Chime



Timer



Visual Schedules and Supports



Florida 4-H Accommodation Kit



Vanessa Spero, Regional Specialized 4-H Extension Agent

Adapted from Cable, J., & Cole, D. (2023). Accommodation Kit. University of Minnesota 4-H Youth Development. <https://4-h-volunteer.extension.umn.edu/train/toolkits-resource-lists/being-inclusive/accessibility>

This kit has been created to strengthen our commitment to welcoming and providing opportunity for all youth. We encourage you to utilize this kit to help foster a sense of belonging and provide simple accommodations for those engaged in our programs.

Purpose

- to support 4-H program staff and volunteers in creating inclusive, supportive learning environments where all youth can thrive, and
- to ensure 4-H staff and volunteers are equipped to provide reasonable accommodations during club meetings, programs, workshops, events, and any gathering where young people and families are present.

How to Use this Kit

- Place all items in this kit in an area that is readily accessible at 4-H meetings or activities. For example, place them at check-in tables or where activity supplies are available. Use disinfecting wipes to clean materials between each use (these are not provided for you).
- Faculty and Staff should let leaders and families know about the 4-H Accommodation Request form ([4-H Addendum ADA Accommodation Plan Request Form 6.16.22.pdf](#)); however, this kit should be made readily available to all, not dependent upon written requests.
- For additional insight on working with youth with disabilities, please see the accompanying [Disability Etiquette](#) tips by University of Minnesota Extension 4-H.



Visual and Auditory Focus

People often need support when it comes to focusing on and understanding the content that's being presented in our 4-H clubs and programs. To support varied manners of learning, consider the ways in which the information is being presented. Are there multiple ways people can engage in the learning (i.e., written formats, audio formats, partner or group communications, visual formats with drawings or illustrations, etc.)? These items can assist learners so they can focus on the materials presented.



- Timers (Clock or Sand): Utilizing a timer during activities can help people visually understand the passage of time. The timer can help ease transitions, encourage independence, and increase productivity.



- Bookmark Magnifier: Use with print materials to increase visual accessibility.



- Hearing Protector: Reducing auditory input can reduce stress, increase focus, and improve concentration for individuals that experience sensitivity to auditory stimuli.



- Highlighters: Highlighters emphasize the importance of specific content. Use for key words in directions and text by highlighting the words.



Fine Motor Supports

Fine motor skills involve the use of the smaller muscle of the hands, such as writing with pencils, cutting with scissors, sewing with thread, and designing or building with small items. To support learning and engagement in our clubs and programs, the following items can be used to help alleviate challenges associated with fine-motor skills.



- Pencil Grips: Pencil grips are ergonomically designed and support comfort, relieve pressure, and help youth with correct writing posture. To use, slide onto the pencil or other writing utensil.



- Grip Tape: Wrap around pencils, utensils, paint brushes, tools, etc. to help people better grip and control items being used.



- Loop Scissors: Loop scissors reduce the tension on hands and fingers and are suitable for right or left-handed individuals. The design will help support hand-eye coordination and fine-motor skills. Adult supervision is always encouraged.



- Tri Grip Markers, Tri Write Pencils, and Triangular Crayons: These are designed in a triangular shape to guide proper writing grip. The shape also helps prevent rolling off tables.



- Foam Grip Tubing: Pair these colorful foam tubes with a variety of common utensils to support self-sufficiency.



Fine Motor Supports Conitnued



- Grippers: These grippers provide a non-slip surface to assist in grasping and opening objects.



- Silicone Craft Mat: This mat is flexible, easy to clean, heat-resistant, and has a non-skid surface. It is adaptable for use with crafts or other small objects, so items don't move around.



- Multi-Sensory Writing Pages: These lined and textured pages support written activities through both sight and touch. The raised lines give people extra-sensorial cues to guide them in letter formation, spacing, and organization.



- Silicone Grip Assist Cuffs: Adjustable, non-slip, and washable, these tools aid individuals with limited grip strength. It can be used with a variety of everyday items such as utensils, toys, sports equipment, and more.



Sensory Items

Sensory items, such as fidgets, help people calm their mind, decrease stress, enhance learning, regulate their bodies, and improve concentration, alertness, and focus. They also increase tactile awareness and keep restless bodies busy.



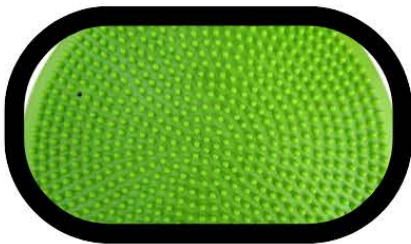
- Fidgets: This assortment of small objects provides an outlet for purposeful self-regulation activity with the hands.



- Chair Bands: Stretchy rubber bounce bands provide an outlet for leg movement while seated.



- Pencil Toppers: These small objects fit over the top of a pencil or pen to provide an easy fidget device and prevent chewing on erasers.



- Wobble Cushion: This cushion creates instability while seated which can encourage building core strength as well as providing an output for youth with sensory disorders.



Communication Supports

These pictorial aids can assist in communication, understanding, and focus for those with hearing or speech impairments, anxiety, attention deficit, or other disabilities, as well as English language learners. Other suggestions include tablets, phones, or other electronic devices that may be provided.



- **Communication Cards:** For students whose verbal communication is limited, the picture cards can provide an effective way to communicate basic ideas and needs.



- **Visual Schedules and Supports:** Visual schedules support understanding and focus, enhance communication and participation, and reduce anxiety. Write on them with erasable markers and select from an assortment of activity cards to customize for individual or group use.