

Tips from Active Learning Space

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Tabletop Mobile

To make a tabletop mobile you will need the following supplies:

1. Three pieces of birch wood – size can vary, but item shown below is 22x11x1.
2. Four “L” brackets – length 5 inches
3. 1/8” elastic – minimal width, use larger widths for children that have increased strength
4. Plastic tubing – large enough to cover elastic
5. Loop turner – available at JoAnn Fabric – for pulling elastic through tubing
6. Drill – to put holes in items to be placed on boards and to drill top of mobile
7. Items to be attached to board
8. Dowel rods – minimum 1/4” diameter – cut slots in dowels for elastic to rest in
9. Router
10. Sander or sandpaper
11. Polyurethane



Figure 1 Dowel rod with slit

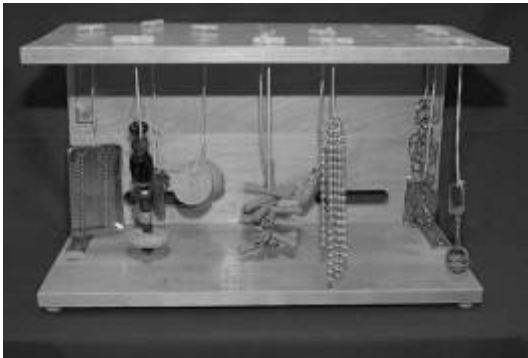


Figure 2 Table-top Mobile hung with a variety of objects.

Cut wood to appropriate length and sand. Drill holes in top board. Approximately 24 holes 3/8" in diameter. With a router, cut two slits in back board – so the mobile can be secured to a table top or wheelchair tray with a strap. Drill pilot holes for "L" bracket – position on the right and left sides of the mobile, top and bottom. Assemble mobile using wood glue and wood nails. Allow mobile to dry thoroughly. Polyurethane the mobile.

Attach elastic to the end of the item(s) to be attached. Make sure that the length of elastic allows for the item to be brought up to a child's mouth from its original location. Cut a piece of tubing and using the loop turner, thread the elastic through the tubing. Once the elastic is covered its entire length, tie the other end of the elastic to a piece of dowel rod that is approximately 1 ½ inches in length. To attach the items to the mobile, slide the dowel rod through the hole and allow the dowel to lie flat on top of the wood. To remove, turn the dowel perpendicular to the mobile and slide the dowel through the hole.

Caution must be used to determine appropriate items to be attached to the mobile. Do not use any items that pose a choking hazard, that are easily broken, or that have sharp edges. The builder is responsible for the safety of the child using the equipment.

The items placed on a tabletop mobile are determined by the developmental level of the child or children to play with the board. Evaluate items for sensory characteristics – visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, and taste. Evaluate an item for the skill needed to manipulate it – pushing, batting, grasping, pulling, taking apart, putting together, etc. Ensure that items can be compared to others of size, weight, shape, etc.

A mobile that requires skills that are too developmentally high or too low for a child will not promote active learning, and may result in limited or stereotypical activity or no activity at all.

References:

Lilli Nielsen, 1992, SIKON: *Space and Self*

Lilli Nielsen, 1989, SIKON: *Spatial Relations in Congenitally Blind Infants*

Lilli Nielsen, 1993, SIKON: *Early Learning – Step by Step*

Lilli Nielsen, 1998, SIKON: *The FIELA Curriculum – 730 Learning Environments*