

Thurrock Sensory Service

Independent Living Skills Newsletter No. 002

Hi everyone!

Welcome to the second Thurrock Sensory Service ILS Newsletter.

We have some more living skills for you to practise and some delicious recipes for you to try out those skills with!

We will look at some mobility skills to think about if out for a walk. We also have some links to fun activities to try.

Accessible Technology

Let's start with a little Tech accessibility. The following App has been recommended by Mr Garwood who is one of the Specialist VI staff at St Clere's

Seeing AI

The Seeing AI App is useful when it comes to identifying objects in front of you.

Seeing AI is an app recommended by Moorfields Eye Hospital, it is a talking camera with several different modes used to identify currencies, colours, people, text and even handwriting!

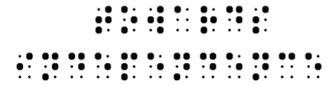


The app is very easy to set up, taking you through a tutorial the first time you use each mode.

I find this app most useful when reading letters that come in the post or instructions on food packaging, however the currency preview has come in handy several times when differentiating between notes.

For more information on the Seeing AI App, go to:

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/ai/seeing-ai>



Life Skills

Spreading butter, jam, peanut butter can be quite tricky, but with practise you can master this skill. Here is the basic technique

SPREADING

1. Hold the knife in the strongest hand and scrape the knife along the butter or margarine. Check the amount of butter or margarine on the knife with fingers.
2. Hold the bread with the thumb and forefinger along 2 edges to make a right angle.
3. With the flat blade of the knife against the bread spread from the forefinger to the thumb or from side to side in one action.
4. Turn the bread and repeat checking that the bread is covered.

Here are some helpful videos offering ideas and things to think about to make spreading butter a little easier:

Buttering Bread

Second Sense:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJGcfh5mhWk&feature=emb_title

New College Worcester:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OeVFNdGgX4>

Once you have mastered the butter spreading see what you can create! There are some lovely ideas included below:

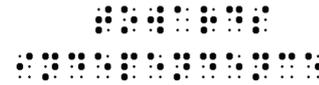
Making a toasted cheese sandwich

Royal Blind School:

<https://learninghub.royalblind.org/mod/page/view.php?id=455>

Some more Sandwich ideas from the BBC:

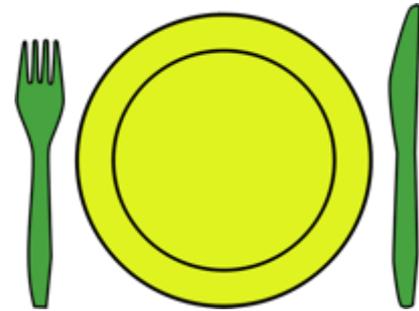
<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/sandwich>



Cutlery Skills

Not everyone's favourite topic but one that does need to be addressed and once you've got the hang of it, you will wonder what the fuss was about!

Having said that, there are quite a few techniques that go into eating a meal. So don't worry if you don't get them all straight away.



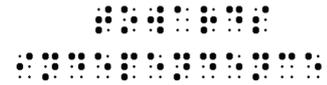
<http://clipart-library.com/cutlery-cliparts.html>

Before you even pick up a knife and fork, think about how you are sitting at the table.

- Have you washed your hands?
- Are you square to the table?
- Are you seated at a good height, whereby your elbows are at right angles to the table top?
- Do you have a set of cutlery that you are comfortable using? There are lots of different types so if you are struggling it could be you need different cutlery. Caring Cutlery or Kura Care Cutlery have contoured, plastic handles that are easy to grip (links on the next page).

If the answer to all of the above is 'yes' then great, you are ready to get eating!

- Using hand over hand support is a good way of getting used to the correct positioning of the knife and fork to start with.
- If you have a coloured plate that can give contrast to your food that may help identify where food is positioned.
- Traditionally the knife is always held in the right hand and the fork in the left. But the knife should be held in the dominant hand as it is doing most of the tricky work.



- You can check that the cutting edge of your knife (which tends to be rounded) is facing downward by gently rocking the knife blade forward and backward on the table top. If it is the wrong way up the knife will be flush to the table.
- Use your fork and the tip of your knife to locate food on your plate and position it to make cutting easier.
- Use the tip of your knife to check the size of piece of food. For instance, if cutting a piece of meat, anchor it with your fork then locate one end and run the tip of your knife over the top until you have judged a mouth size portion where you can pierce with your fork. Then place your knife against the back of your fork and start to cut.
- Think about the weight of the food on your fork, this will help you to judge if you have the right amount to fit in your mouth!
- You can use your knife as a buffer by holding it still and scooping towards it with your fork.

There are some really useful ideas in the attached link. If you want to focus on cutting move 20 minutes through the video. You will see that the skills may vary from those above, the important thing to remember is finding the way that works for you.

<https://www.perkinselearning.org/videos/webcast/mealtime-skills>

Dycem mats are very useful to keep your plate in position while eating. They can also be used under bowls and chopping boards when preparing food.

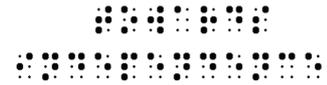
<https://www.dycem.co.uk>





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Caring Cutlery

<https://www.caresuperstore.com/kitchen-and-dining/eating-aids/caring-cutlery/>



[Adult and junior sets available in both]

Kura Care Cutlery

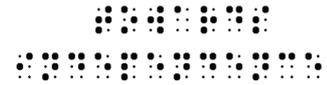
<https://www.nrshealthcare.co.uk/eating-drinking-aids/cutlery-aids/kura-care-adult-cutlery-set>



For ideas on how to support your child 's use of a spoon independently have a look at the following link

WonderBaby .org

<http://www.wonderbaby.org/articles/blind-child-spoon-use>



Bolognese Sauce (Serves 6)

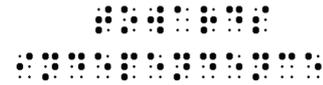
Here is a really nice recipe for a Bolognese sauce. Bolognese is very versatile and can be used with spaghetti (or even better, tagliatelle), in a lasagne, on top of a jacket potato, in a Quesadilla, even on a pizza if you really want to!

- 30g unsalted butter
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 60 g unsmoked pancetta
- small onion chopped
- ½ carrot chopped
- celery stick chopped
- garlic clove chopped
- bay leaf
- 350g beef mince
- 1 tbsp. tomato puree
- 300 ml chicken stock
- pinches grated nutmeg
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper



1. Heat the butter and oil and cook the pancetta for 2 minutes, stirring constantly.
2. Add the onion, and when it has begun to soften add the carrot, celery, garlic and bay leaf. Cook for a further 10 minutes, stirring frequently.
3. Put in the minced beef and cook to brown it.
4. Add the tomato puree and continue to cook for a further 2 minutes. Remove and discard bay leaf and pour in the stock. Season with the nutmeg, salt and pepper. Mix well and simmer uncovered for about 2 hours. Stir occasionally and add a little hot water if the sauce is too dry. The ragu should cook very slowly indeed, at the lowest possible simmer.

Then choose your favourite way to serve it!



Millionaires Shortcake

Shortcake

- 150g plain flour
- 75g caster sugar
- 50g butter

Caramel

- 100g butter
- 100g caster sugar
- ½ tin condensed milk

Topping

- 200g plain chocolate



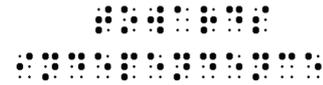
This is what you do:

1. For the shortcake: Beat the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl and mix in the flour to make a stiff dough.
2. Press it into a greased 18cm square cake tin. Bake for 30 minutes 180° C (fan 150 ° C) Gas Mark 4 for 30 minutes. Allow to cool.
3. For the caramel: Put the butter, condensed milk and sugar in a thick based saucepan and heat gently with a low heat. Boil for 5 minutes stirring all the time. Pour over the short cake and leave to set.
4. Break up the chocolate and put in a basin over a pan of hot water, low heat. Melt the chocolate but do not let the water boil. Pour the chocolate over the set caramel. Leave to set. Cut into pieces.

Skills

- Mixing
- Using an oven
- Cooking using a Bain-marie (heating over hot water)

Remember safety first – always use the oven/equipment with supervision.



Fruit Smoothies

This drink is delicious for breakfast or anytime during the day. Make them with fresh or frozen soft fruits, raspberries, strawberries, ripe mango, or canned apricots.



image: Freepik.com

Ingredients

- 125 ml fresh fruit juice
- 1 banana
- 2 tablespoons of natural yogurt (optional), or ice cream.
- Handful of other fruit.

Equipment

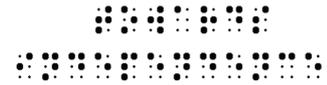
- Chopping board
- Sharpe knife
- Blender
- Sieve

How to make it

1. Roughly chop the banana. Put in the blender.
2. Add the liquid and soft fruit
3. Whizz for one minute until smooth and frothy
4. Pour into glasses and serve immediately.

Skills

- Knife skills
- Using a blender
- Pouring



Take a look at the link below for ideas for creating a calm space with your child.

A Calm Space

Suzanne Little and Hannah Burnley

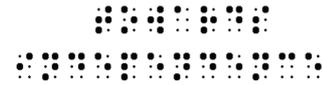
Suzanne Little: Specialist teacher, innovator of colour tents

Hannah Burnley: Qualified Teacher of the visually impaired (QTVI), responsibility for children with complex needs and a visual impairment.

We are passionate about creating the right environment to avoid sensory overload for children with complex needs, with this need becoming more highlighted especially in these difficult times, we would like to offer some ideas and top tips to use with minimal/no cost and limited resources at home in order to create a safe “Calm space”.

<https://viewweb.org.uk/wp-content/public-files/A%20Calming%20Space%20-%20Suzanne%20and%20Hannah%20%281%29.pdf>





Getting into the Garden

The BBC have some great ideas of activities you can try indoors and outdoors, such as growing plants from food, decorating a plant pot and grow your own fresh salad.



Take a look at the link below for more information

http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/gardening_with_children/plantstotry_sensory.shtml#top

They also have some great tips for creating a sensory garden:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/gardening_with_children/

Some Sensory Fun

Why not give these sensory bags a go?

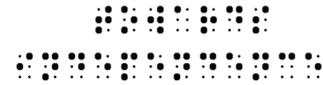
You only need:

- Clear Hair Gel
- Permanent Marker
- Zipper Bags
- Two Wiggly Eyes
- buttons



for more information, go to:

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/261912534563172081/>



Mobility Technique – Indented Road Crossings

If you are able to get out for some exercise, the indented road crossing is something that the whole family can use and benefit from.

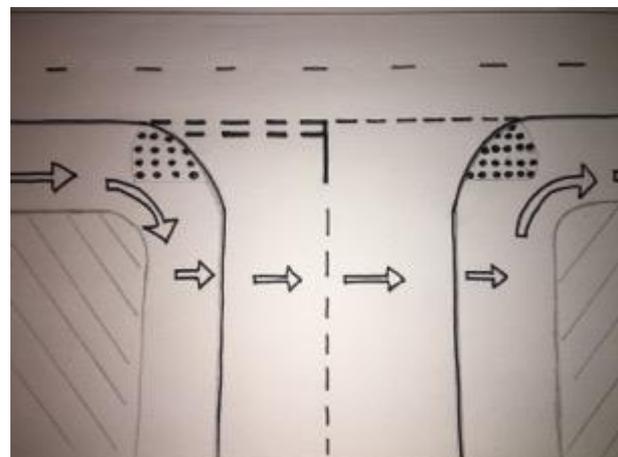
Safety first – cross roads only with supervision.

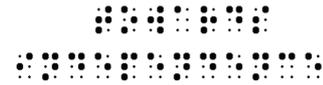
When crossing a side road, you will often find that the tactile paving is positioned very close to the corner of the road. This is not usually the best place to cross. At such times an indented crossing should be used, by moving away from the corner and walking into the side road, at least as far as where the pavement becomes straight and then locating a safe place to cross. The benefits of doing so:

- The number of directions that you need to look is reduced to left and right
- The sound of the traffic on the road being crossed is easier to hear and less likely to be confused with other traffic
- The crossing distance is shorter than at the mouth of the road
- There is less chance of veering into the main road
- It allows greater stopping distance and time for drivers entering the side road

It does mean you have slightly further to travel, as you have to indent and then out-dent back to your route. This can initially be a little confusing for your child.

Having located a safe crossing point, ensure your child's feet are behind the kerbstone and that they use active looking and listening, turning their head from side to side to ensure it is safe to cross and then encourage them to state when it's safe. Before crossing the road together.





Creative Corner

Playdough Recipe

Whether you feel like creating a masterpiece in playdough, or want to warm up your fingers before using your Perkins Braille, here is a super easy playdough recipe.

Makes 1 coloured ball

Prep 10 minutes

You will need:

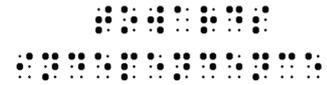
- 8 tbsp. plain flour
- 2 tbsp. table salt
- 60ml warm water
- food colouring
- tbsp. vegetable oil



Method

1. Mix the flour and salt in a large bowl. In a separate bowl mix together the water, a few drops of food colouring and the oil.
2. Pour the coloured water into the flour mix and bring together with a spoon.
3. Dust a work surface with a little flour and turn out the dough. Knead together for a few minutes to form a smooth, pliable dough. If you want a more intense colour you can work in a few extra drops of food colouring.
4. Store in a plastic sandwich bag (squeeze out the air) in the fridge to keep it fresh.

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/playdough-recipe>



BBC Good Food have put together some fun activities and recipes for children. They look really fun. There are also budget lunch ideas from classics like fish fingers, to pasta salads.



<http://e.bbcgoodfood.com/q/17Q6ROurxNnhDPnGpvtkBM/wv>



Take a look at the following link for some creative ideas and activities to do indoors, there are tabs for different age ranges.

https://www.twinkl.co.uk/home-learning-hub?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_2020-05-10_GB-ENG_SEND&utm_content=custom6

How about a Time Capsule? The link below has resources/ worksheets to complete, such as a 'Letter to My Future Self'. The completed sheets can then be put into an indoor family time capsule. Make a note on the calendar to look back on this work to remind yourselves of what life was like for a while

https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/coronavirus-time-capsule-resource-pack-t-tp-2549605?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_2020-05-10_GB-ENG_SEND&utm_content=custom1

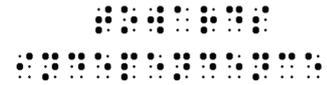
Or for 100 Fun Indoor activities take a look at:

https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/100-fun-indoor-activity-ideas-t-tp-2549426?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_2020-05-10_GB-ENG_SEND&utm_content=custom3



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The following charity has been brought to our attention recently by the great work it has been doing in supporting families. Wipe Away Those Tears is a small Essex based charity, who provide grants to help families pay for some of the extras that can be involved in caring for a child with additional needs. Those who we know that have used the charity have all commented on the quick response they received from Wipe Away Those Tears.



www.wipeawaythosetears.org

The Family Fund provides grants to families on low incomes who have disabilities or severe medical conditions to help with the cost of equipment, goods or services - from washing machines and refrigerators to sensory and educational equipment that they might not otherwise be able to afford. The grants are typically worth £400 to £500 per family, but vary depending on need..



You can find out more about the Family Fund here: <https://www.familyfund.org.uk/>