

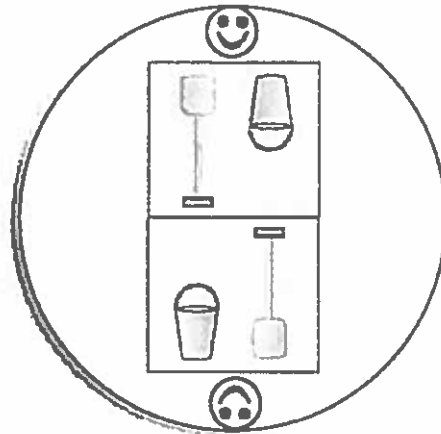
4. Working at the Sand Tray

In the early stages of play with sand it is likely that a young child will be encouraged to fill buckets and make sandcastles. This activity readily lends itself to an Identiplay type of activity.

Making Sandcastles

Equipment

- 2 buckets.
- 2 spades.
- Sand tray containing 'wet' sand.
- Tape or cane to divide the tray into two play areas.
- Two sets of play moulds.



Script

- 'Sand in bucket'.
- 'Pat, pat, pat'.
- 'Pick it up'.
- 'Over it goes'.
- 'Pat, pat, pat'.
- 'Lift it up'.
- 'Hurray – a castle'.

Top Tips

Some children with ASDs may find playing in or with sand difficult as they find the 'feel' of the sand unpleasant. To enable them to overcome this difficulty it may be possible to provide them with rubber gloves to wear during the activity.

Some children may be very reluctant to play with sand at all. However, if a child has a particular interest in, for example, stars, as was the case with

Working at the Sand Tray (cont.)

one of the children in the setting, making stars in the sand tray using a mould may enable him to access this resource.

Generally one would stand opposite the child, either at opposite ends or sides of the sand tray. Some children with ASDs may find this difficult – in such instances standing side by side with the child may prove to be successful.

Some children with ASDs find working in the close proximity of others difficult, a situation that could easily occur when young children choose to play at or in the sand tray. Usually pre-school practitioners or teachers restrict the number of children accessing this learning opportunity at any one time. In addition, it may be helpful, in the initial stages of more generalised learning, to mark the space each child has to stand in and create play zones within the tray itself. As the child with an ASD becomes more able to manage the proximity of others then these 'restrictions' can be systematically reduced until they are all removed.

More advanced sand play

In much the same way that miniature world characters or equipment is used to extend the child's imaginative play through the tabletop activities previously outlined, then so it is possible to create similar play scenarios within the sand tray or builders' tray.