

# Appendix

---

## *A Letter to Families Explaining the Importance of Hands-On Learning*

**D**ear Families,

As part of our ongoing effort to offer your children the best possible developmentally appropriate early childhood school experience we will be enriching our curriculum by including tactile (hands-on) themes. Tactile themes focus specifically on an object or material such as boxes, ribbons, hats, or water.

Psychologists and educators agree that a developmentally appropriate curriculum for young children needs to emphasize the children's interactions with their immediate environment. This view is also supported by recent neuroscience and brain-based research, which emphasizes that children need concrete hands-on learning opportunities. Young children learn through their five senses, so we need to provide experiences that allow children to touch, see, smell, taste, and hear. By focusing on an object or material, we can maximize the children's opportunities to have hands-on learning experiences.

There are many positive learning experiences that we can provide for the children by doing tactile themes. For example, the following are just a few of the activities for the theme "boxes":

**Literacy:** Print a letter on an index card and ask the children to find the same letter printed on a box. (Visual discrimination, Letter recognition)

**Mathematics:** Invite the children to guess how many items, such as toy trucks, will fit in a box. Put the trucks in the box and count them. (Estimating, Counting, Spatial relationships)

**Science:** Put boxes made of different materials in water. Invite the children to observe what happens. (Developing observation skills, Studying cause and effect)

**Social Studies:** Organize a project to cheer someone up. Ask the children to fill a small box with pictures, drawings, written notes, or things that they have made, then send the box to a person who is ill or to a senior citizens center. (Developing a sense of social and community responsibility)

**Physical Development:** Draw a shape or simple picture on a panel from a cereal or gift box to create a lacing card. Punch holes on the outline of the shape and invite the children to use ribbon to lace through the holes. (Eye-hand coordination)

**Creativity:** Ask the children to pretend that there is a very heavy box in the room next door that needs to be moved to the office. Discuss with the children their ideas for moving the box. (Encouraging the children to think of and try multiple ways to solve a problem)

We are excited about this new addition to our program and welcome any objects or materials that you can share with us to make the children's experience with tactile themes richer and deeper. Our first tactile theme will be \_\_\_\_\_, and it will begin on \_\_\_\_\_. If you have any \_\_\_\_\_ that you would be willing to share with the children, please label them carefully and have your child bring them to school.

Thank you for your interest and support!