# Adapting Equipment for Teaching Object Control Skills PALAESTRA [Vol. 27 - No. 4 : 2013](http://www.palaestra.com/issue/vol-27-no-4-2013) | **Feature Articles**

**Sean Healy**

University of Virginia

### Five Ss of Equipment Adaptation. The five Ss of equipment adaptation (see Figure 1) can be used to guide teachers and practitioners to adapt equipment for children with disabilities (Healy & Wong, 2012).

#### Size All equipment can be adapted in size to allow the user to be more successful. For example, balls can be adapted so the child can throw, kick, or strike more efficiently. For throwing, the ball should be of a suitable size and weight so the child feels comfortable holding it and can easily lift it. For kicking and striking, a bigger ball allows children with coordination difficulties to be more successful, providing them with a greater area of target with which to make contact. The size of nets, basketball rings, bowling pins, goals, hula hoops, poly spots, skipping ropes, and other equipment should also be adapted to suit the child.

#### Sound Particularly for children with visual impairments, the addition of sound to sports equipment can make a previously inaccessible activity accessible; sound can be added to balls, targets, cones, and other equipment. This can be achieved through the use of security beepers or bells that can be fastened to equipment using Velcro or tape.

#### Support This method of adaptation is particularly useful for teaching ball activities; it makes activities less dynamic and increases the child’s chance of success. For example, to aid a child to practice striking with a bat, you can place the ball on a tee or suspend it with a string.

#### Surface Adapting the surface of equipment can greatly improve its use for many children; for example, adding texture to a ball or the handle of a bat can allow the child to grip it more efficiently. This can be done by wrapping thin rope around an equipment piece and covering it with tape. For children with visual impairments, the adaptation of the surface of equipment is particularly important as it allows them to more efficiently use their proprioceptive skills. The addition of color to equipment will also greatly help some children with visual impairments to see the equipment piece more clearly.

#### Speed Slowing down the speed of some equipment can greatly aid some children. Balls, in particular, often need to be adapted so that they are slower moving for easier catching, kicking, or striking.

#### Such adaptations can be applied to all equipment to ensure the child can use the equipment with maximum success.