

Description

The activity apron is an apron which has various pockets with items and fabrics attached onto it that an individual can explore whilst wearing the apron around them. The items on the apron are designed to provide visual and tactile stimulation to the person by incorporating fabrics and objects of different contrasting colours and textures. Auditory input can also be achieved by including objects that make a noise when moved or tapped together (e.g. dangling a few shells together). By creating an apron with objects that are familiar and of interest to the person, the apron can become more personalized and provide an opportunity for reminiscent activity. It is also possible to create the apron with a theme of interest to the person, such as cooking, gardening, or the beach.

It is used for:

- Visual input
- Tactile input
- Auditory input
- Fine motor skills
- Reminiscence

It can be used to manage the following behaviours:

- Agitation – the activity apron can be used as a calming tool by helping to encourage the person to engage in a quiet, sit down activity.
- Anxious and calling out behaviours – the activity apron can be used as a distractional tool to provide an alternate activity for the person to focus on.

How to make:

Materials

- An apron can either be made by using a sewing pattern or purchased. Choose an apron which has a good base colour for contrasting, such as black, blue, red or yellow.
- Purchase different types of material that are of contrasting colour to the apron colour (again, the colours suggested above are a good example). They also can be of varying textures, such as soft, furry, silky, mesh etc. These materials will be used for pockets, pocket flaps, and areas of tactile and visual stimulation.
- Gather a range of items to decorate the pockets, hang on the apron, or be placed inside the apron pockets. Examples of items may be ribbons, lace, laminated pictures or photos, zips (with large pull ring), buttons, buckles and fasteners, handkerchief, or other personalized or theme related objects.



- Gather items that can be used to secure objects, pockets and pocket flaps, such as Velcro, zips, elastic and threads.

Please note: When adding items like beads or buttons, make sure they are large, securely attached and will not become a choking hazard. It may also be useful to take a photograph of the finished design prior to leaving it to the person, so you will know when things are missing / lost.

Making the pockets and attaching the items

- Considering the size of the apron, determine areas for an appropriate number of pockets to put onto the apron. Areas can also be left for sewing interesting textured fabrics or items directly onto the apron.
- Measure and cut out material for the pockets and pocket flaps, considering extra material required for the hems.
- Decide which items will be placed into each pocket. A maximum of two items per pocket is recommended.
- Attach these items onto the apron securely before sewing the pockets (this may involve hand sewing rather than machine sewing). Depending on the type and size of the item, it may be secured by attaching it to a length of ribbon or soft rope that can be sewn onto the apron. (See Figure 1 below)

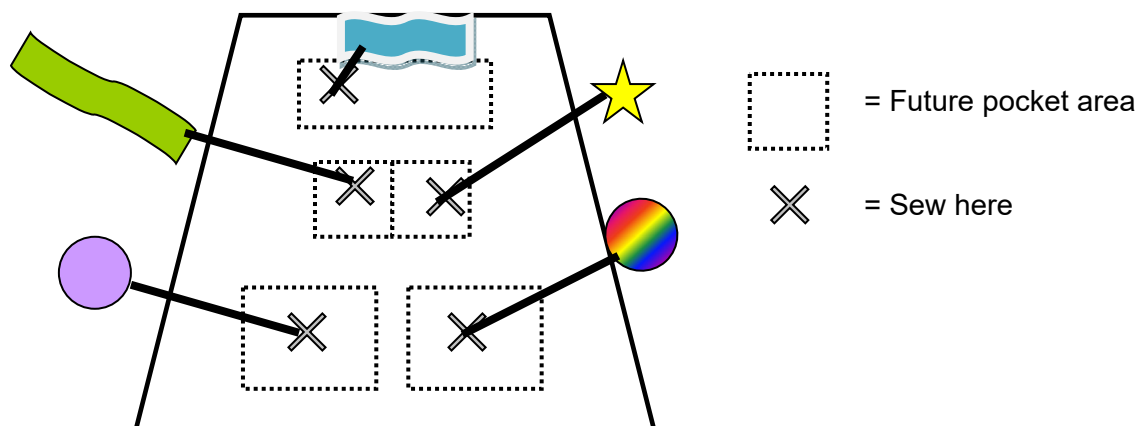


Figure 1: Securing items that will be inside the apron pockets

- Pinning or tacking around the edges of the pocket and pocket flaps may be required to create the hem and prevent the material from fraying. Then sew these edges in place before sewing the pockets onto the apron. (See Figure 2 below).

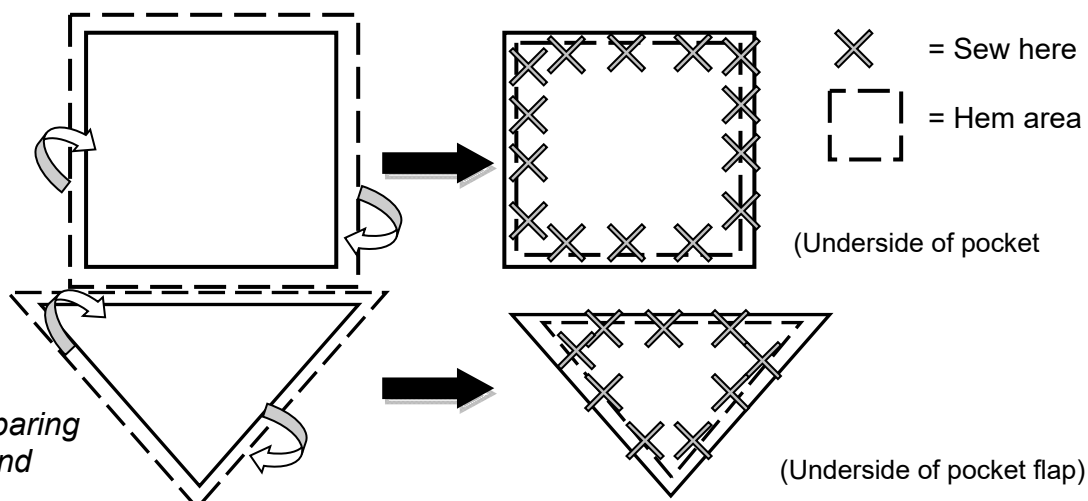


Figure 2: Preparing the pockets and pocket flaps

- Sew the three sides of the pocket onto the apron, remembering to leave the top edge open to create the pocket opening. (See Figure 3 below)

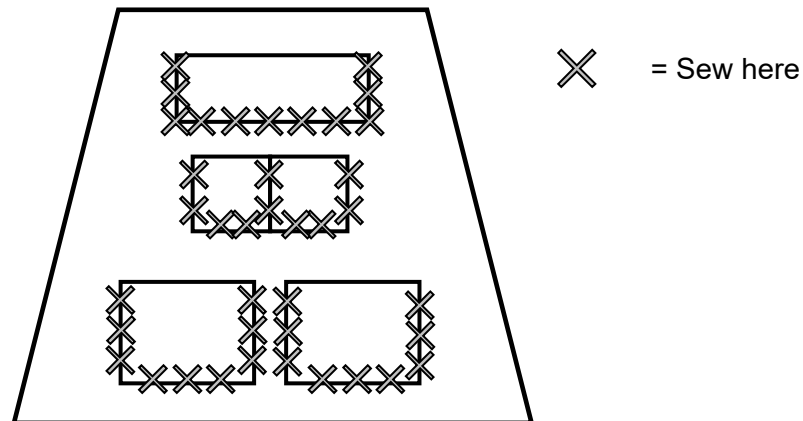


Figure 3: Sewing the pockets onto the apron

- Sew a flap onto the selected pocket/s. The flap may be different shapes, such as square, triangle or curved. (See Figure 4 below)

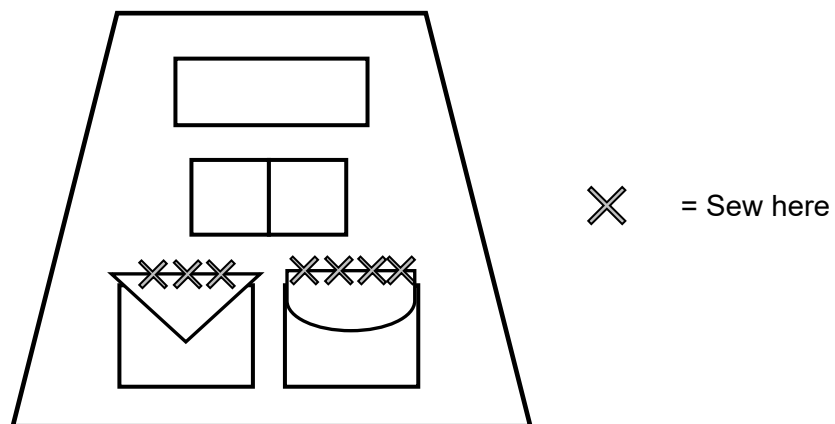


Figure 4: Sewing pocket flaps

- Decorate the pockets, flaps or other areas of the apron by attaching more interactive materials, fastenings and items, such as buttons and ribbon.

How to Use:

Introduce the activity apron to the individual by presenting it to them and encouraging them to look and touch the items and materials on the apron. Tell them it is an apron they can put on and touch and keep things they like in it. Ask them if they would like to put it on and try it out.

Let the person explore the apron and encourage them to touch and explore what is in the pockets if needed.

Involve conversation and social interaction: What colour do you like the best? Did you ever sew and make thing like this? What's you favorite thing on the apron? What does this remind you of?

Or relate it to the theme, e.g.: What sort of building/painting/fishing did you do?

Adaptations

More Challenging

- If the person is able, involve them in the designing and making process. Have them choose two materials and two items they would like to include. Have them decide on a theme.
- Allow the person to collect other items to put in their apron.

Less Challenging

- Model the different things you can touch and do with the apron, such as opening the pockets, pulling out the items, touching materials and buttons etc. Guide the person's hand to the items or materials if needed, to help encourage them to explore it.

Cost and Care

Cost: Varied (can be free if use of left over material or personal items)

Supplier: Hand-made. Black BBQ apron was purchased from Bunning's Warehouse (approx. \$10). Other useful stores: Spotlight, Riot art supplies, The Reject Shop.

Care info: Varied (wipe or hand wash)

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

- Purposeful engagement in chosen activities has many benefits for all people. Create a flexible environment where spontaneity, laughter joy and simple pleasures is a natural part of each day.
- Recognise each person's uniqueness.
- The client determines what is unique to them.
- The social environment supports individual needs.
- Engagement in meaningful activity supports independence, and wellbeing.