

THE TANGLE[®] BOOK

**Having Fun with
the APH Tangle Toy**

Marie J. Amerson, M.Ed., TVI



AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE
FOR THE BLIND, INC.

The background of the page features a large, stylized illustration of the APH Tangle Toy. It is a long, flexible, segmented worm-like object with sections in light blue, pale yellow, and light orange. The toy is coiled in a loose 'S' shape across the page. At the top, the words 'THE TANGLE BOOK' are written in a large, bold, black, bubbly font. Each letter has a thick yellow outline, and the entire title is surrounded by a blue, cloud-like border. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the word 'TANGLE'.


THE TANGLE[®] BOOK

Having Fun with the APH Tangle Toy

Marie J. Amerson, M.Ed., TVI

In keeping with our philosophy to provide access to information for people who are blind or visually impaired, the American Printing House for the Blind provides this book in large print (18 pt.) and braille.





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The Tangle Book: Having Fun with the APH
Tangle Toy

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About the Author

Marie J. Amerson

began working with students with multiple disabilities as a recent graduate with a degree in Special Education (1974). That first year she worked at a community facility serving 10 through 13-year-old students who had severe intellectual disabilities.



In 1975, Amerson took a position as a teacher in a new program at the state hospital for individuals with mental disabilities, Central State Hospital in Milledgeville, Georgia. The new position provided educational programming in the hospital setting for children with severe-profound intellectual disabilities. She worked with children who ranged in age from infants to adolescents.

Upon moving to Macon in 1979, Amerson took a job with the Georgia Academy for the Blind (GAB) serving students with multiple disabilities including a visual impairment. She obtained

About the Author

certification in the area of visual disabilities and later received a Masters Degree in Interrelated Special Education. During her years in the classroom at GAB, Amerson served students ranging in age from 5-12 years old.

Amerson participated in the Utah Ski-Hi INSITE training to prepare for working with the Georgia PINES Program, Georgia's parent-infant training program. Marie served as a parent advisor for Georgia PINES for 4 years.

After moving from the classroom at GAB into a more administrative position, Amerson often found time to visit the preschool class and spend time working with the 3- and 4-year-olds. She continued as part of the evaluation team, particularly for the evaluation of young students with multiple disabilities.

Since retiring from GAB, Amerson continues to work in the field as a vision and multiple disabilities consultant. She has facilitated local participants in distance education classes as well as offering private assistance to families.



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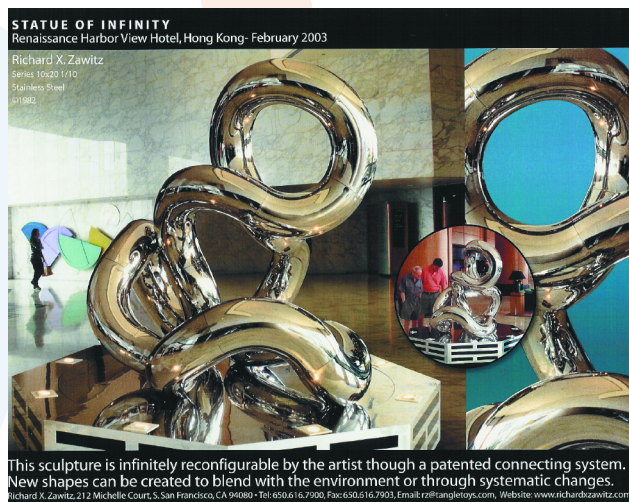
Design and Layout

Bisig Impact Group



Message to the Readers

American Printing House for the Blind staff, attending the annual International Toy Fair held in New York City, saw the Tangle Toy® and submitted it to the APH Toy Team for review. The original Tangle Toy, created by artist Richard Zawitz, is based on the Tibetan Infinite Knot. His study of the Knot inspired him to create his world renown sculpture titled *Infinite Sculpture*. Now available in plastic, over 60 million Tangle® units have been sold since 1982. All are copyrighted works of art. The Tangle Toy contained in this kit is made exclusively for APH and its colors and textures are coordinated specifically for the vision field.



© Richard X. Zawitz 1981

Message to the Readers

The APH Toy Team recognized several properties of the toy that are beneficial to early learning and physical development.

- It fosters independent/solitary play.
- Games can be played and enjoyed between sighted and visually impaired peers.
- Depending on the activity, it can be age-appropriate for a variety of ages.
- It provides opportunity to coordinate and refine motor skills through play. Specifically the wrist twisting motion can assist in the development of page turning skills and strength building.
- It helps encourage color and tactile discrimination.
- Active learning is FUN!

Message to the Readers

Your Tangle Toy Kit contains:

Code-Color	# of segments	Texture
K-Black (opaque)	9	Smooth
W-White (opaque)	9	Tire Treads
Y-Yellow (opaque)	9	Bumps
Y-Yellow (transparent)	9	Bumps
R-Red (transparent)	9	Spiral
B-Blue (transparent)	9	Alligator

54 Segments

We hope you enjoy implementing the activities in this book, and we encourage you to create new ones and to share them with APH, teachers, parents, and students.

Sincerely,

Tristan Pierce
Multiple Disabilities Project Leader





Introduction

Since the basis for everything that is learned in school and in adult life is established at a very early age, children must have the opportunity to interact with objects in their environment. This interaction develops motor and cognitive skills, as well as foundations for language and social interactions. Young children do this through play, and toys can offer excellent opportunities to develop important skills.

The primary objective of play and toys is FUN, but various skills can be acquired along the way. For the child who has a visual impairment, including those with additional disabilities, intervention strategies may be needed to encourage the child to play actively and ensure that the child has access to toys and materials to explore.

The APH Tangle Toy has many of the features considered key in the selection of toys for students with visual impairments—visual and tactual appeal, sturdiness and flexibility of use, and responsiveness to touch. It is easy to manipulate into different shapes. With its infinite knot shapes and variety of colors and textures, the Tangle Toy can be used in various forms to encourage a child to explore, move, and play.



Introduction

The Tangle Toy includes segments that feature bright, primary colors, and each color has its own unique texture. The curved segments may be combined to create contrasting sections which can be twisted and moved to provide a visually interesting object to help catch a child's attention. For a child who is blind, the textures present a tactually interesting target. Because each colored segment has its own unique texture, activities which are generally focused on using specific colors are easily adapted for the child who is blind.



Early Childhood and Special Needs

Infants without vision may not naturally regard hands or bring them together at midline. The Tangle Toy is useful as an intervention tool to help a young child become aware of both hands and can be used to help the child practice movement patterns useful for later learning. Adjusting the number of segments used, as well as choosing certain colors or textures can accommodate the specific needs of a child.

- A **very small or young child** can successfully hold a six-segment loop as opposed to a heavier 18-segment loop.
- A child with **low vision** may be more successful when doing an activity using segments with contrasting colors, (i.e., red & yellow or black & yellow).
- A child with **no vision** may learn tactual discrimination better while exploring (perhaps orally) the toy when distinctly contrasting textures are offered, (i.e., smooth & bumps or spiral & bumps).

Early Childhood and Special Needs

- A child with visual impairment and an **intellectual disability**, may learn and enjoy an activity better when simplicity is used, (i.e., start out using one color or texture, slowly introduce a second color or texture, and gradually build complexity into games and activities). You will need to closely observe the child's responses to the Tangle Toy and expand activities accordingly. The child may respond better when age-appropriate activities are introduced.

Students with Cortical Visual Impairment

The Tangle Toy activities designed for children with ocular forms of visual impairment may also be appropriate for children with CVI with some modification. Consider the following guidelines that take the unique visual and behavioral characteristics of CVI into consideration:

- If the child demonstrates **visual field preferences**, initially present the Tangle Toy in the dominant viewing field.
- If the child's visual attention is gained most consistently through **movement**, present the Tangle Toy in the child's dominant peripheral field and slowly move it back and forth to help establish attention to the toy.
- If the child demonstrates **latency**, allow ample wait time for the child to visually locate the Tangle Toy.
- If the child demonstrates a **color preference**, select color segments based on the preferred color.

Students with Cortical Visual Impairment

- If the child demonstrates **light gazing**, use the transparent segments on the APH Light Box. Children who have minimal visual responses may attend best if the room lights are lowered or even turned off.
- If the child is nonresponsive to **complexity**,
 - keep the background simple,
 - avoid using verbal direction or praise *while the child is looking at the toy*,
 - select segments so that the assembled Tangle Toy has no more than 1 to 2 colors, and
 - the child may not use vision while exploring the textures of the segments.
- If the child incongruently uses **visual-motor skills**, remember that looking and reaching may occur as separate events rather than as a single action.



Students with Cortical Visual Impairment

- If the child demonstrates resistance to **novelty**, the child may not visually attend to the toy; experience with the object over time, use of favorite color, possible use of the APH Light Box, and attention to complexity may promote recognition of the Tangle Toy.
- If the child has difficulty with **distance viewing**, the Tangle Toy may be best attended to when it is within inches of the child's face.



Games and Activities

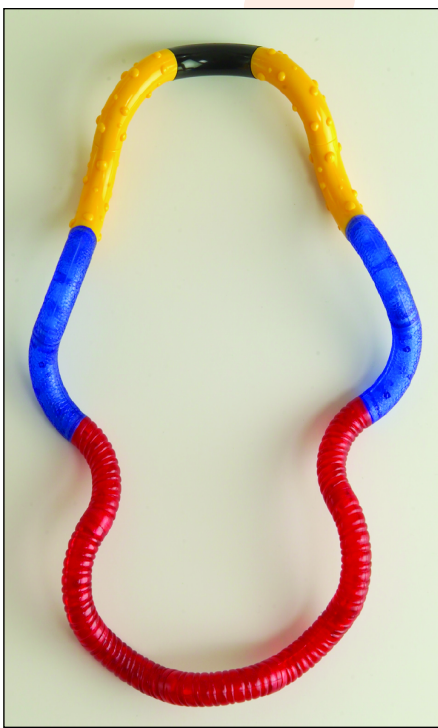
Keep in mind that some level of hand strength is needed for connecting the segments of the Tangle Toy. This challenge may be used for some children as a way to help them strengthen their hands and improve fine motor skills. If a child does not have the hand strength or coordination, connect the segments for him to decrease the rise of frustration.

Recognize that toys can encourage interactive play and utilize the fascination of the twists and loops to engage the child with peers.

Present some activities as puzzles for children to solve, (i.e., create matching shapes or loops, locate specific segments, etc.) and always incorporate activities that require physical exertion. Learning is best maintained when a student is alert and active. All of these suggestions allow for more age-appropriate use of the toy.

Use various Tangle Toy segments, assembled into shapes or not, in conducting Learning Media Assessments. Observers can note the primary sensory channel used by a student engaged with the toy.

Row-Row-Row Your Boat



For a smaller and simpler version, delete the last 7 segments.

Target Population

low vision, blind, special needs, toddlers

Segments and Combination

- 4 Yellow segments
- 1 Black segment
- 4 like segments (Blue for this example)
- 7 or more other segments
B-B-Y-Y-K-Y-Y-B-B-other 7 segments

Row-Row-Row Your Boat

Skill Areas

motor skills; social skills; address visual attention to midline; communication

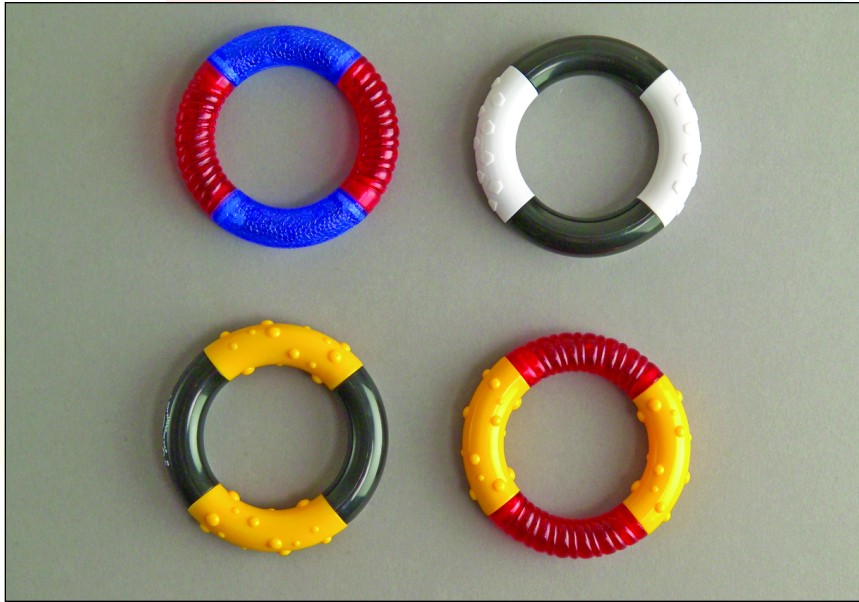


Instructions

Assemble sections of Tangle Toy so the child can hold two like segments (Blue in this example) in each hand with the Yellow and Black section at the top and the larger section at the bottom of the loop

- Help child move sections, alternating hands in a rowing motion, to the familiar tune, "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."
- Keep the Yellow/Black section at the top for visual interest.
- Enrichment Activity: Two children face each other sitting cross-legged, holding onto the loop. They move back and forth while singing.

Tangle Toy Reach

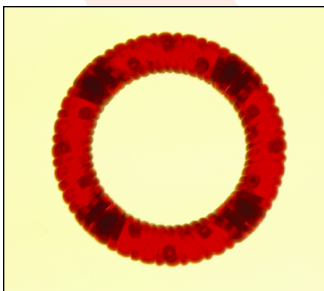


Target Population

6-12-month-old who has torso and head control;
low vision, blind, special needs

Segments and Combination

- 4-segment rings—Y-R-Y-R; W-K-W-K;
B-Y-B-Y; etc.



*Use a one-color ring for child
requiring less complexity.*



Tangle Toy Reach

Skill Areas

Improve balance and reaching



Instructions

- Place infant in sitting position between adult's legs with infant's back to the adult's stomach.
- Place infant's hands, palms down, in front to explore Tangle Toy with one hand while the other hand is placed on the floor for support.
- Use cues to bring child's attention to Tangle Toy location.
- For a child with low vision, be sure to use light-colored segments on dark flooring and dark-colored segments on light flooring.
- For a child with CVI, use his/her preferred colors or transparent colors on a light box.
- Assist child in reaching for Tangle Toy rings.
- Enrichment Sing-along: "This is a circle, this is a circle. How can you tell, how can you tell? It goes round and round, no end can be found. It's a circle, it's a circle."

Tangle Cruise-and-Seek



Target Population

12-18-month-old toddler learning to walk by cruising along furniture; low vision, blind, special needs

Segments and Combination

- Use texture/color which contrasts with the background surface (i.e., for dark colored sofa or furniture, use Yellow or White segments; for light-colored furniture, use Red, Black, or Blue; for rough-textured upholstery, use Black or White).

Tangle Cruise-and-Seek

Skill Areas

motor skills, visual attention; social skills

Instructions

- Place Tangle Toy segment on surface of sofa and other furniture which the child uses for cruising.
- Use cues to bring child's attention to the Tangle Toy segments.
- As child retrieves a segment, add it to Tangle Toy to create loops or chains; allow child to help; make sure the toy segments snap together loudly.
- Add other forms of ambulation for learners who are more physically involved (i.e., Roll-and-Seek).



Ring Stack



Target Population

low vision, blind, special needs

Segments and Combination

- 4-segment rings—all one color (Red, Blue, Black, Yellow, or White) or mixed, Y-R-Y-R; Y-K-Y-K; B-Y-B-Y; etc.



Ring Stack

Skill Areas

motor skills; visual attention



Instructions

- Assemble 4 segments into a ring; repeat with other segments.
- Use plastic bowling pin or other stand-up peg for stacking post (paper towel roll taped onto a board).
- Have child stack rings on the pin or post (may challenge student to stack in a specific pattern, i.e., Red, Yellow, Blue, Red, Yellow, Blue).

Match-Up Wiggle



Target Population

low vision, blind, special needs

Segments and Combination

- 4 Black segments formed into a ring.
- W-W-Y-Y-B-B-W-W-R-R-Y-Y-B-B-W-W-R-R-R-R connected and looped through center circle five times before final connection.



Match-Up Wiggle

Skill Areas

fine motor; tactual and/or visual attention—
finding specific textures/colors



Instructions

- Hand Tangle Toy to child and show how to twist segments around the center ring.
- Challenge child to move segments in order to hold matching segments in each hand (a Blue segment in right and left hand, a Yellow segment in right and left hand, etc.).
- Help child move hand over the five outer loops and locate target textures (bumpy Yellow, spiral Red, etc.).

Tangle Threader



Target Population

low vision, blind, special needs

Segments and Combination

- three 4-segment rings
- 9 White segments connected into a strand

Tangle Threader

Skill Areas

fine motor; cognitive

Instructions

- Assemble 9 White segments into a line, curling 4 of the segments to use as a circular base and the remaining segments stretched upward, like a cobra.
- Have child place rings on the White segments.
- When all rings have been placed on the White strand, help the child snap the final White segments together.



Counting Games



Target Population

4-5-year-old; low vision, blind, special needs

Segments and Combination

- various segments

Counting Games

Skill Areas

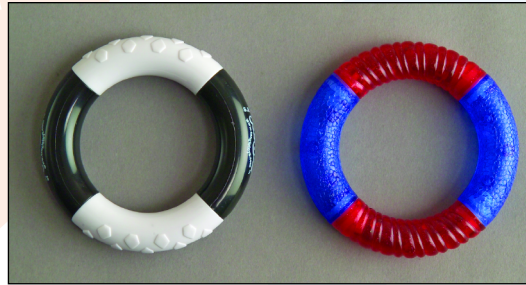
cognitive; motor

Instructions

- Have child count individual pieces as he places them inside or outside a large tangle circle.
- Have child count individual pieces as he snaps together or pulls apart pieces of the Tangle Toy.
- Have child count number of rings threaded onto a Tangle Toy loop.
- Have child count pieces of a specific color or texture as he tracks through a loop.



Target Tangle

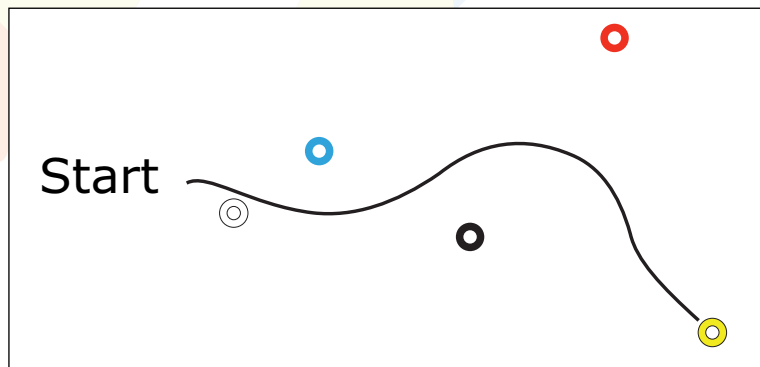


Target Population

3-4-year-old; low vision, blind, special needs

Segments and Combination

- 4-segment rings of a single color/texture or 2-color/texture combinations



This course, made with a rope, is designed to teach left and right by following the verbal instructions, "Locate the red spiral ring two steps to the left." For a simpler version, remove all the rings except the one on the end.

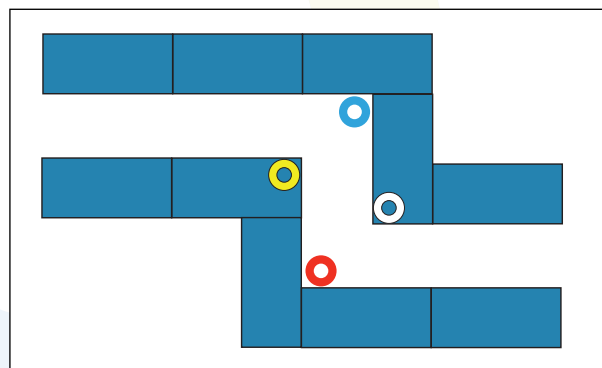
Target Tangle

Skill Areas

cognitive; motor

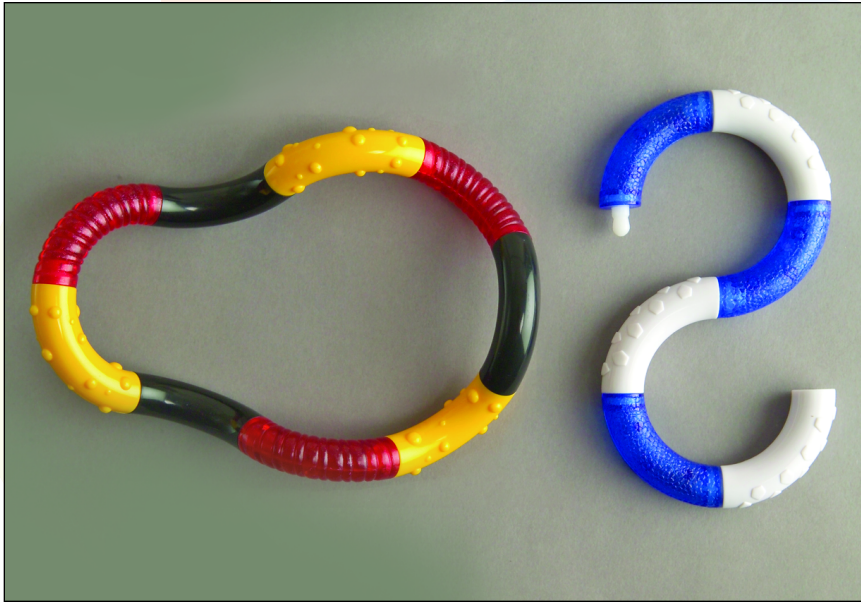
Instructions

- Place rings on floor within a “course” laid out for this activity. (Use mats, masking tape, rope, circular hoops, etc. to create the course.)
- For a child with low vision, challenge the child to visually search for targets and retrieve.
- For a child who is a tactual learner, challenge the child to tactually search for targets and retrieve.



This course, made with floor mats, teaches the concept of inside and outside corners, as well as cognitive and motor skills.

Tangle Patterns



Target Population

low vision, blind, special needs



Segments and Combination

- 6 or more pieces; increasing the number relative to child's ability to reproduce patterns



Tangle Patterns

Skill Areas

cognitive



Instructions

- Learning Partner creates a pattern using 2 or more segments (i.e., Y-K-Y-K; or Y-K-R-Y-K-R).
- Student is challenged to reproduce the pattern using segments provided. (Learning Partner may control the number of segments available from which the student chooses segments. In other words, place only Yellow and Black segments in the bucket from which the student makes his or her selection; or place Yellow, Black, and Red; or place a larger variety of segments from which to choose.)

Variation: Student creates a pattern and challenges the Learning Partner to reproduce; student then checks the Learning Partner's work to verify if it is correct.

Tangle Search



Target Population

low vision, blind, special needs



Segments and Combination

- various segments—number and variety depends on child's ability level



Tangle Search

Skill Areas

cognitive; fine motor

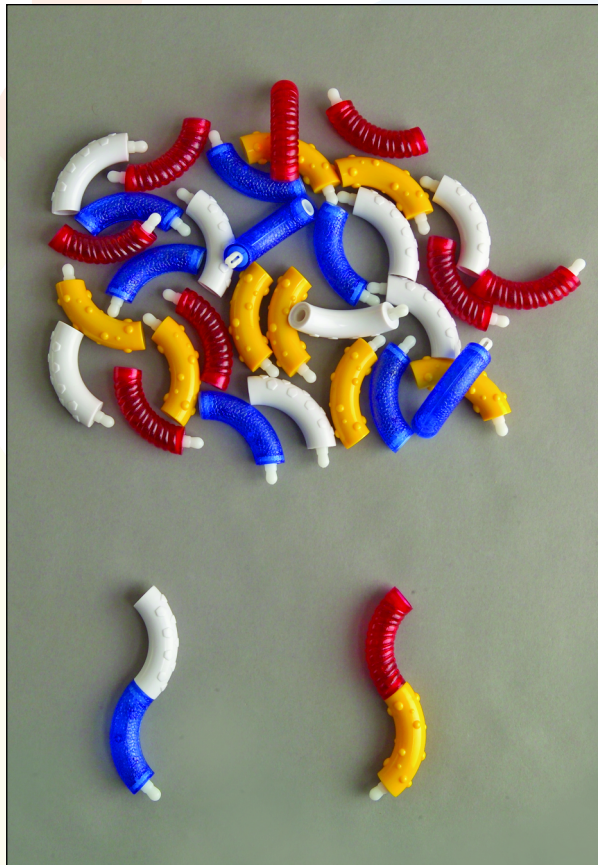


Instructions

- Place individual segments into bag or covered box which has opening for the hands.
- Have child select a segment to add to the Tangle Toy strand.

Variations: Challenge child to select only segments of specified texture; challenge child to create a pattern as she selects segments.

Tangle Relay



Target Population

5-7 year-old; low vision, blind, special needs

Segments and Combination

- W and B segments
- Y and R segments



Tangle Relay

Skill Areas

social; motor; cognitive

Instructions

- Assign students into two teams of three students.
- Give each team a single segment of each of the two colors for their team.
- Place all the other segments into container(s) at the relay point.
- Instruct teams to retrieve only those segments that match their team segments.
- As one team member returns with a segment and the next team member is sent, segments are assembled by the remaining team members.
- First team with all of their segments assembled into loop of alternating segments (W-B-W-B... or Y-R-Y-R...) wins the relay.

Note: Conduct relay at distance and within time frames appropriate to the individual students involved. Place a sound source at the container.

Tangle Toy Ring-Arounds



Target Population

low vision, blind, special needs

Segments and Combination

- all segments

Tangle Toy Ring-Arounds

Skill Areas

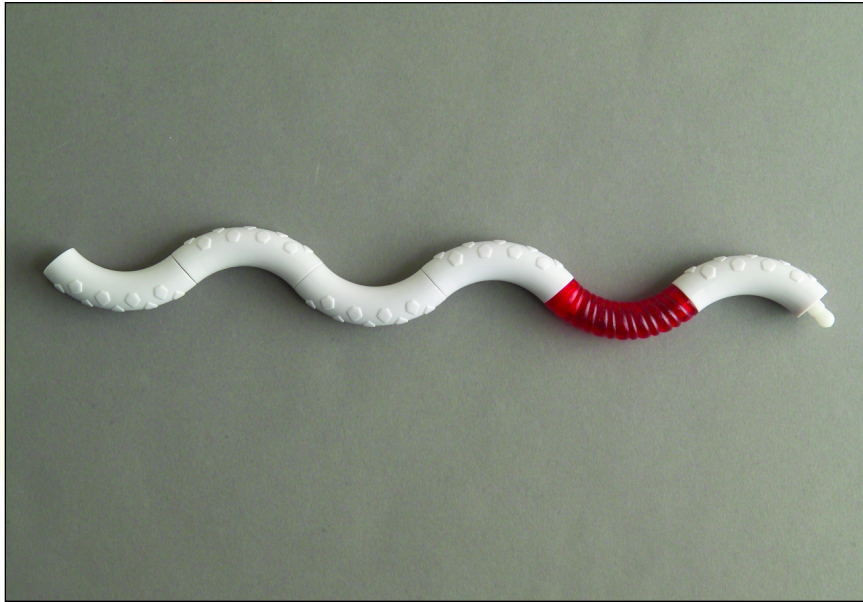
motor; cognitive

Instructions

- Place all segments into a container.
- Instruct child to create 4-segment rings with each ring made of only one color/texture. (Alternately, challenge child to create rings with only 2-color/texture combinations.)

Variations: Instruct child to assemble 4-segment sections without making the final connection which would form a ring; loop sections together to form a chain (snapping each 4-segment section into a ring after it has been added to the previous ring).

Tangle Tracking



Target Population

low vision, blind, special needs



Segments and Combination

- 5 segments of one color/texture
- 1 segment of contrasting color/texture



Tangle Tracking

Skill Areas

cognitive; fine motor; pre-braille



Instructions

- Assemble all six segments into a strand.
- Place strand on a flat surface so it creates a horizontal or curvy line.
- Have child run fingers along the strand and locate the segment which is different from the others.

Tangle Pop-Apart



Target Population

9-18 months; low vision, blind, special needs



Segments and Combination

- 3-segment sections



Tangle Pop-Apart

Skill Areas

motor; cognitive; social



Instructions

- Have child pull off individual segments and drop each one into a plastic bucket or tin canister.
- Make a game of turn-taking for pulling apart the segments.
- Enrichment Activity: After popping the segments apart, have the child place like pieces in a row, making sure to turn them in the same direction.

Tangle Coil



Target Population

3-5-year-old; low vision, blind, special needs

Segments and Combination

- all 54 segments



Tangle Coil

Skill Areas

motor



Instructions

- Have student snap together all pieces to create a long strand.
- Have student curl the strand to create a coil which can be rolled on the floor or table.

Variation: Challenge the student to place segments together grouped by color or texture.

Tangle Twos



Target Population

3-5-year-old; low vision, blind, special needs



Segments and Combination

- all 54 segments



Tangle Twos

Skill Areas

social; motor

Instructions

- Assign two students to be partners.
- Instruct the partners to take turns attaching a segment to create a coil or loop of Tangle Toy.

Variation: Each student creates a section with 2-4 segments in a pattern before it is added to the coil or loop.

Tangle Twist



Target Population

low vision, blind, special needs

Segments and Combination

- 4 Black segments formed into a ring
- 2 Yellow segments
- 9 Blue segments
- 9 Red segments



Tangle Twist

Skill Areas

fine motor; cognitive



Instructions

- Create center ring of Black segments.
- Assemble remaining segments and loop through the center circle five times before making final connection.
- Challenge child to use both hands to twist the loops and locate Yellow segments.

Note: This activity can be presented as a visual or tactual challenge.

Zebra Tangle



Target Population

low vision, special needs



Segments and Combination

- 4 Yellow segments
- 6 Black segments
- 6 White segments

The background of the page features a large, stylized 'Z' shape. The left vertical stroke of the 'Z' is light blue, the middle horizontal stroke is light yellow, and the right vertical stroke is light orange. The top and bottom horizontal strokes are blue. The blue strokes are decorated with segments of red and yellow, resembling a zebra's stripes. The title 'Zebra Tangle' is written in white on a blue rectangular background at the top right.

Zebra Tangle

Skill Areas

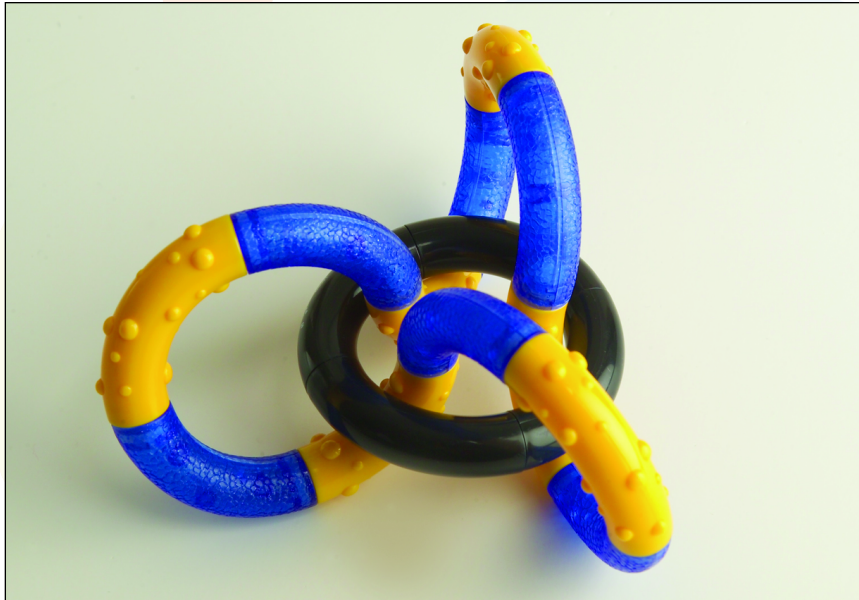
visual attention

A horizontal bar with a blue background and segments of red and yellow, matching the zebra theme.

Instructions

- Form center ring of 4 Yellow segments.
- Assemble remaining segments (W-K-W-K-W-K-W-K-W-K) and loop through center ring three times.
- Encourage child to twist the center ring or the outer loops.

Tangle Twist-and-Shake



Target Population

low vision, blind, special needs



Segments and Combination

- 4-segment ring
- 6 Yellow segments
- 6 other segments



Tangle Twist-and-Shake

Skill Areas

visual/tactile attention; motor

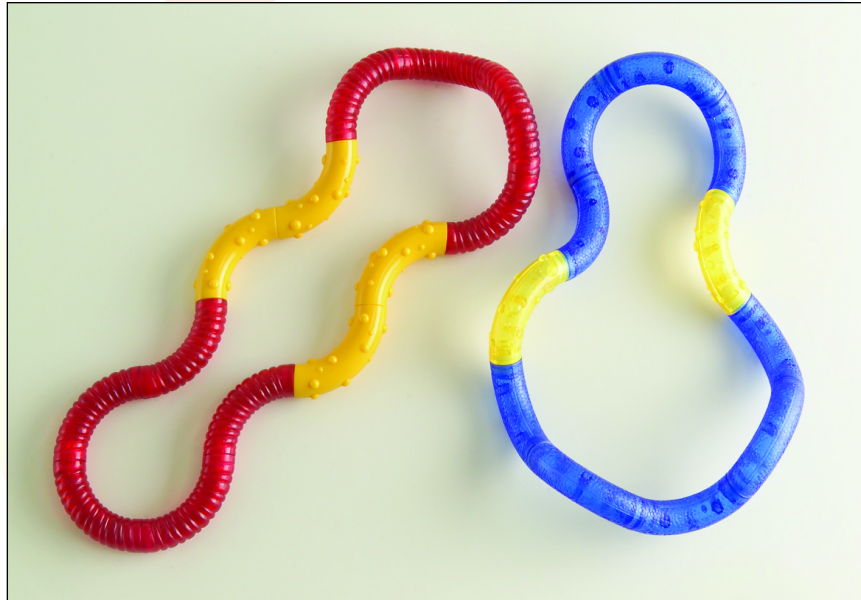


Instructions

- Form center ring of 4 segments.
- Assemble remaining segments, alternating Yellow and other color and loop through center ring three times.
- Encourage child to twist loops and shake the Tangle Toy.

Note: Movement of the outer loops allows the center ring to move freely, creating sound and visual interest; using Yellow segments in the outer loops provides tactual interest.

Twist and Tangle



Target Population

9-18 months; low vision, blind, special needs



Segments and Combination

- 4 Yellow segments
- 9 Red or Blue segments



Twist and Tangle

Skill Areas

motor; visual/tactile attention



Instructions

- Assemble large loop (Y-Y-R-R-R-Y-Y-R-R-R-R).
- Encourage child to hold, twist, move.

Notes: Segments may be varied to meet needs of student who resists specific textures. For example, if a student does not like the Yellow, bumpy segments, use White segments instead. If you are trying to encourage visual attention, be sure to use two contrasting colors in the loop.

The number of segments may be varied according to the reach of the child, i.e., fewer segments for a small child, more segments for a larger child.

Tangle Turns



Target Population

low vision, blind, special needs



Segments and Combination

- 3-segment sections of each color



Skill Areas

social; tactile/visual attention



Tangle Turns

Instructions

- Form a large loop, alternating sections of Red, Yellow, Blue, and White, using all the segments.
- Include only one section of Black segments (three segments).
- Students form a circle and hold the large loop in their hands.
- Play music as students pass the large loop through their hands to the right or to the left as directed.
- Stop the music and the individual holding the Black section is designated as the individual who stands inside the circle, who is selected to identify which direction the loop goes next time, or to name a song to use for the next round, etc.

Note: If the game is played as in “Hot Potato” and a student is removed from the circle, then sections of the loop may be removed to make the loop smaller with each elimination.

Tangle Tying



Target Population

blind, low vision, special needs

Segments and Combination

- 9 Black segments
- 9 Yellow segments
- assemble strand of
Y-Y-Y-Y-Y-Y-Y-Y-K-K-K-K-K-K-K-K-K



Tangle Tying

Skill Areas

motor; self-care

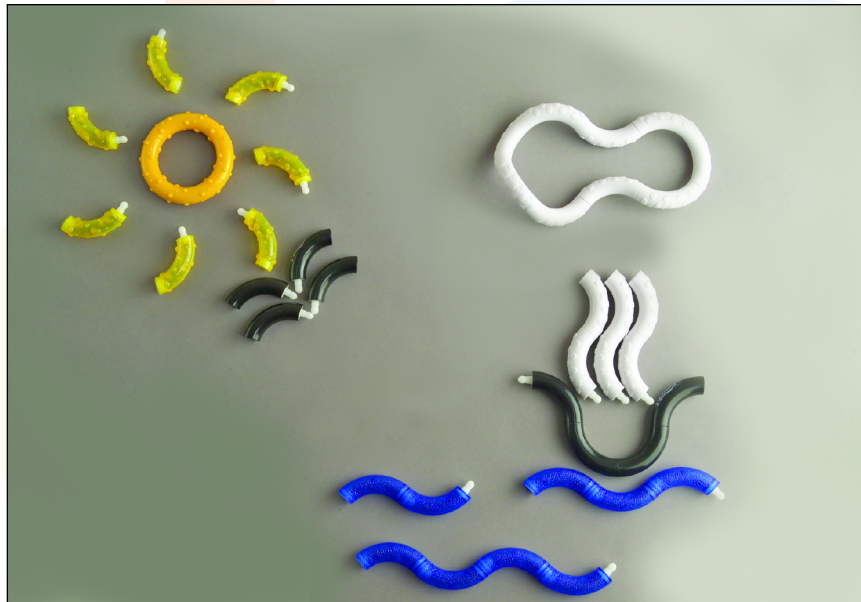
Instructions

- Place strand in front of child curved so the Yellow segments are pointed upward on the left and Black segments are pointed upward on the right.

Instruct the child to:

- cross the Black segments over the Yellow segments,
- pick up the Tangle Toy and hold where the Black crosses the Yellow with the ends pointed up and a loop at the bottom,
- twist the Black segments so the end points down on the backside of the loop,
- push the Black end up through the loop of the Tangle Toy, and
- grasp the ends of the toy and pull to create a knot.

Tangle Sculpture



Target Population

low vision, special needs

Segments and Combination

- any combination of colors and textures

Tangle Sculpture

Skill Areas

motor; visual; decision making; creativity

Instructions

- Let the child select any combination of segments that she likes.

Instruct the child to

- Create a sculpture.
- Have each child choose a name for their sculpture.
- Let the students walk around the class and admire each other's creativity.



Tangle Accessories



Target Population

blind, low vision, special needs

Segments and Combination

- any combination of colors and textures

Tangle Accessories

Skill Areas

motor; visual; decision making; creativity

Instructions

- Let the child select any combination of segments that she likes.
- Create bangle bracelets.
- Create a belt.
- Create a necklace.
- Create a crown.
- Use a mirror so the child can see herself wearing the Tangle Toy.



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WARNING:

CHOKING HAZARD-Small parts
Children under the age of three
should be supervised when
playing with the toy.



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