

## Long-Term Care Survey Alert

### ACTIVITIES CARE PLANNING: Develop 'Activities Bins' Geared To Residents At Different Functional Levels

**Use a simple set of supplies to create a make-believe day at the beach.**

Organization is the name of the game for activities personnel who want to be ready to roll with an activity that can meet the needs of people with different capabilities and care plan goals.

And an "activity bin" that includes all of the supplies for an activity goes a long way toward saving time that can staff can best spend on residents. "The bin should include enough supplies for about eight to 10 people," says **Lois Sheaffer-Kramer**, a recreational therapist in Bloomingdale, IL. The activities staff restocks the bins before they put them up, she adds.

#### **Create a Day at the Ocean**

Designing the activity bins requires you to think through how to meet a variety of goals for people with different abilities and interests. For example an "ocean bin activity" lends itself well to meeting diverse needs, says Sheaffer-Kramer. The bin would include colored sand, paper, stencils and glue--and long-handled paint brushes with non-toxic paint--for those interested in an art project, she says. Other ready-to-go activities in the bin might include:

- Simulated bags of ocean water. Use double-sealed baggies filled with blue hair gels. The baggies are partially filled and taped shut. "People with more advanced dementia might want to knead or play with those," says Sheaffer-Kramer.
- A tape or CD with ocean sounds. "Put residents in charge of changing the music," she advises.
- Ocean aromatherapy. "We spray one mist of ocean air freshener," she says.
- Hand massage. The staff uses ocean breeze lotion for hand rubs during the activity.
- Shell and fish collecting activity. "We provide a bin of sand and a bin of water and hide shells in the sand for people to find. Staff put fake fish in the water," she explains.

**Alternative idea:** If the facility has an aquarium, you could do the activity in the room with the aquarium so people could watch the fish.

- A fishing game. Make laminated paper fish and attach a magnet to them. Then use a metal fishing pole to "catch" the fish that have numbers to prizes on the back.