A practical resource to support the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) Area of Learning in the Northern Ireland Curriculum

The To Be Me (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) thematic unit for Key Stage 1 pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) aims to provide teachers with support in beginning the planning, teaching and assessing of PDMU within the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

This resource is comprised of six sub-units
- Fit for Life
- Let’s Get Moving
- Home is Where the Heart is
- Feast for the Senses
- Straight from the Heart
- Let’s Get Together

It details suggested learning activities and methodologies which will assist teachers in developing children's personal, emotional, social and health needs at the very earliest stages of development.

It includes links to the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Framework, the cross curricular skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT. The resource also connects to the Areas of Learning where appropriate and incorporates the principles of Assessment for Learning.

Strand 1
Personal Understanding and Health

Themselves and their Personal Attributes
Begin to recognise uniqueness and value personal qualities and abilities

Their Own and Others’ Feelings and Emotions
Begin to recognise and manage some feelings

Keeping Healthy and Safe
Begin to recognise some aspects of a healthy lifestyle

Strand 2
Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community

Similarities and Differences
Begin to recognise differences in each other

Learning to Live as a Member of a Community
Begin to understand their role in the classroom community

Relationships with Family and Friends
Begin to understand the relationships within a family

Similarities and Differences
Begin to recognise differences

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Curriculum Objective
To develop the young person as an individual

Key Experiences
Pupils will have opportunities to:
• develop an awareness of their body parts; and
• develop an awareness of the functions of different body parts.

Learning Intention
Pupils will begin to:
• recognise some personal attributes, strengths and abilities.

Success Criteria
Pupils will begin to understand the functions of different parts of the body.

Attitudes and Dispositions
• Curiosity
• Self-belief
• Tolerance
• Openness to new ideas
• Flexibility

Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities
Thinking, Problem-Solving, Decision-Making
KEY QUESTION

Can I move my hands?

That’s Handy

Ensure your pupils are in a comfortable position, where they can focus on the movement of their hands. Using a range of oils and lotions to stimulate movement and senses, encourage your pupils to open and close their hands.

Encourage the acquisition of language by explaining what you are doing and reinforce familiar vocabulary, for example ‘hands’, by getting (where appropriate) your pupils to repeat the words.

Remember some pupils with PMLD can suffer from stiffness in their hands and may need some exercises to warm them up. Stroke their hands all over, including the edges of the hands and fingertips. Try easing their thumbs out slowly.

Work on each hand separately, massaging in some baby lotion, moisturiser or oil.

Open and close your pupils’ hands with your hand (pressing gently on the top of their knuckles) and encourage some pupil initiated movement.

For further information see CCEA’s ‘Quest for Learning: Guidance and Assessment Materials for Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties’.

You will need:

Resource 1:
Clapping Rhymes

Resource 2:
Visual Prompts for Throwing and Catching

• Baby lotion, massage oils and moisturiser
• Towels
• Balloons
• Toys
• Ribbon or string
• Noise-making objects: shakers, bells, groan tubes, bumble balls, noise blocks etc.
• A selection of balls: medium sized, soft rubber and plastic balls, textured balls, battery operated bumble balls and scented balls
• A selection of visual markers

Balloon Touch

Suspend a balloon in the air from a piece of ribbon or string, ensuring that the balloon is just above your pupils’ eye level. Encourage your pupils to grasp or hit the balloon with their hands. You can also use different types of balloons (perhaps ones with pictures), colourful toys, theme-related objects or preferred items.

Use this activity as an opportunity to reinforce turn-taking. Play alongside your pupil and take turns to grasp or tap the object.

For pupils who need a challenge, attach a series of balloons to the ceiling. Position each balloon so that it is slightly higher than the previous one. Have your pupils jump up and tap the balloons in sequence. Use a timer to add an element of excitement and motivation.

Alternatively give each pupil a balloon and demonstrate tapping it lightly upwards. Encourage your pupils to keep the balloon off the ground for as long as possible.
Extension Activities
Create shadows with hands by using a strong light projected on a wall by a projector.

Encourage pupils to hold a noise-making object that can be moved with their hands to create a noise. Note that some pupils may require verbal and physical prompting. For example, encourage your pupils to move the object in a variety of speeds and motions to create different noises.

Demonstrate placing the noise-making object into one hand and then the other. Encourage your pupils to do the same themselves.

Try using several different instruments/noise-makers, as pupils may have an individual preference for texture and sound.

Look for a positive response, see CCEA’s Quest for Learning for ideas and strategies.

Further extension could involve using an object in each hand (identical or non-identical). Encourage your pupils to move their hands in rhythm simultaneously or alternately. Progress to building up a rhythm to enable them to play a part in a group lesson or school performance.

You can make links to:
- **Physical Education** by encouraging hand and arm movements and the co-ordination of movement;
- **Mathematics and Numeracy** by counting the number of times pupils reach for the balloon/object, and how far they have to reach;
- **Language and Literacy** by talking through the activity with pupils, describing what is happening and what they might be feeling; and
- **The Arts (Music)** by exploring different instruments and putting sounds together.

Cross Curricular Skills:
**Communication** - Be able to learn from demonstration and modelling
**Communication** - Learn to work and play cooperatively
**Communication** - Develop routines of listening, turn-taking, sharing and cooperating
**Communication** - Use non-verbal methods to express ideas and engage with listener

Thinking Skill and Personal Capability:
Make links between cause and effect
Can I move my hands?

(Continued)

Clapping Games
Sit behind your pupil, ideally facing a large mirror. Hand on hand, move your pupil’s hands in a clapping motion while singing, saying a rhyme or counting.

Move to sit facing your pupil. Clap their hands slowly in the middle of the upper body while singing a simple tune (for example Pat-a-Cake Baker’s Man).

Gradually reduce prompting to your pupil’s wrists and lower arms. See Resource 1 for suitable rhymes. For further rhymes go online at www.gameskidsplay.net and click on ‘Clapping Rhymes/Games’.

You can make links to:
• The Arts by singing songs together;
• Language and Literacy by saying rhymes;
• The World Around Us by incorporating traditional rhymes; and
• Mathematics and Numeracy by clapping numbers and rhythms.
Ball Toss

Have your pupils form a circle. Use a visual cue, such as a coloured circle or marker, to indicate where they should stand. Ask your pupils to hold their hands out in front of them with palms upwards. Some pupils may need a physical prompt with clear demonstration for this. Position yourself inside the circle. Give a ball to one of your pupils and move to approximately half a metre away. Face the pupil who has the ball and hold your arms and hands out in the same way as your pupils.

Gesture to your pupil to hand you the ball. Repeat the process of handing each other the ball.

Gently toss the ball to your pupil (underhand). Don’t be concerned at first about them catching the ball. Simply retrieve the ball, place it in your pupil’s hand again and return to the same position.

Prompt your pupil to toss the ball to you. If necessary, imitate the movement of tossing the ball. You can use the visual prompt in Resource 2 to help.

Continue tossing the ball back and forth until your pupil becomes more confident with tossing and catching.

Vary the type of ball used, to make it more interesting. This activity can be made more difficult by gradually increasing the distance between yourself and your pupils.

Use this activity to reinforce turn-taking and anticipation.

You can make links to:

- Physical Education by encouraging eye-hand co-ordination and throwing and catching skills; and
- Language and Literacy by talking through the activity using the appropriate language.
Before beginning any of the full body movement activities with your pupils, it is a good idea to perform warm-up exercises with them.

Encourage your pupils to perform the ‘Cross Crawl’. Have them touch their right elbow with their left knee and then their left elbow with their right knee.

This stimulates the two hemispheres of the brain and is beneficial for the co-ordination of movement.

Cross Crawling can be done while standing up, sitting down or lying on the floor.

Further information on exercises designed to encourage integrated brain activity can be found at www.primarymovement.org, www.braingym.org.uk and www.earlyyearsfundamentals.co.uk.

Make a Move
Place your pupils on an unconventional surface, such as a resonance board (search the internet for pictures of these for reference), foil blanket, vibrating mattress, water mattress or blow up bed to encourage movement through materials that amplify the senses.

Working with one or two adults, gently roll your pupil from side to side. This movement will stimulate their senses and nervous system.

Prompt your pupil to make a move, or gesture, towards one of the adults and then to the other.

Be aware that some pupils will be able to initiate more movement if they are placed on their stomach rather than their back. Encourage pupils (where appropriate) to lift themselves from a lying to a sitting position.
Encourage pupils who have voluntary limb movement to move their arms and legs to create noise and enjoy novel sensations.

Use noise-making objects/instruments or sing favourite songs to encourage your pupils to pay attention to you. Play a favourite CD during this session to encourage movement with music.

You will need:

- **Resource 3: Marching**
- **Resources 4: Lyrics**
  - A variety of stimulating surfaces
  - Noise-making objects/instruments
  - Music

**Marching**

Demonstrate marching with exaggerated movements, showing the lifting of opposite legs and arms. Sing or play the CD ‘The Ants Go Marching’/‘The Grand Old Duke of York’. A visual prompt is available in Resource 3 and the lyrics are in Resource 4.

Encourage your pupils to follow your demonstration. They may need one-to-one guidance, including physical guidance, to attempt these movements.

**Thinking Skill and Personal Capability:**

Make connections between learning in different contexts

**Communication:**

Use non-verbal methods to express ideas and engage with the listener

**Cross Curricular Skill:**

Communication - Use non-verbal methods to express ideas and engage with the listener

**Thinking Skill and Personal Capability:**

Make connections between learning in different contexts
**Key Question**

**Can I move my legs?**

**Leg Work**

Arrange a series of obstacles on the floor in a line (for example small boxes, small cones, hurdles, rope, stuffed toys, hoops). Model the movement of stepping over them in turn. Encourage your pupils to step over the obstacles. You may need to support some pupils for this activity.

For pupils who need a greater challenge, make the obstacle course longer or use a timer to time how long it takes them to complete the course.

Your pupils will need to learn patience and turn-taking skills to allow for individual differences in ability.

Consider videoing this activity and then playing it back so pupils can discuss their performance.

When appropriate, adapt the activity to teach stepping onto objects (like stepping stones) or jumping into hoops in sequence with feet together.

See Resource 6 for visual prompts.

Repeat these activities to allow pupils to build on their skills and improve through practice.

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**You will need:**

- **Resource 5:** Stepping
- **Resource 6:** Jumping
  - Various obstacles
  - A video camera

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**Can I move my legs?**
For pupils who find jumping difficult try the following movements:

- Gently lift up one of their legs at the back and encourage them to find their balance by hopping.
- Encourage your pupil to step onto a bench, box or stage and jump off.
- From a standing position, encourage your pupil to bend their knees and gently lift them under the arms as they spring up.
- Encourage pupils to lift their arms up in the air to stretch their bodies to facilitate jumping.

Thinking Skill and Personal Capability:
Reflect on methods and make simple conclusions

Cross Curricular Skills:
Communication - Be able to learn from demonstration and modelling
Communication - Develop routines of listening, turn-taking, sharing, co-operating and reaching agreement
Communication - Develop confidence in being with adults and pupils in a variety of contexts
Communication - Read a range of texts for information, ideas and enjoyment
Mystery Box
Obtain a cardboard box and cut a hole in it large enough for your pupils’ hands to reach inside. Place under the cardboard box several medium-sized objects that are commonly found around the school and home (for example cup, spoon, lego).

Encourage each pupil in turn to reach into the box, through the hole, and retrieve one object. Add some interesting or unusual objects.

Remember to reinforce that the purpose of the task is to take one item out at a time (if pupils find this difficult, only place one object at a time in the box).

Take a video of your pupils performing the activity and watch it together afterwards. Discuss some of their reactions and how these might affect other pupils in the group (for example refusal, surprise, pushing in).

You can make links to:
- **Physical Education** by developing fine motor skills by lifting;
- **Language and Literacy** by describing objects verbally (where appropriate); and
- **Mathematics and Numeracy** by focusing on the properties of objects (number of sides, corners, etc.).

You will need:
- **Resource 7:** Tidy Up
- **Resource 8:** Play Dough Recipe
- **Resource 9:** Fine Motor Skills and Play Dough
  - A cardboard box
  - Various household objects
  - A video camera
  - A bowl
  - A plastic container with lid
  - Coins
  - Play dough
**Picking It Up**

Scatter ten small objects on a table in front of your pupils (for example blocks, buttons, beads or coins). Using your thumb and first two fingers (pincer grip) pick up an object and place it into a bowl.

Guide your pupils’ hands and encourage them to use the pincer grasp to pick up an object and place it into the bowl.

Repeat the activity, reducing the amount of prompting required to pick up and release objects.

Develop this activity into posting coins through a slit cut into a plastic container with a lid. If you use real coins, this can form part of a lesson on coin recognition by sorting.

Encourage your pupils to tidy up after the activity. To allow for this, end the activity session five minutes early and devote those minutes to tidy up time. Objects that pupils have been playing with should be put away in a suitable container. Use a visual cue, like the one in Resource 7, to help.

**Shaping Dough**

Encourage a range of fine motor skills activities using play dough. Tubs of play dough can be bought or alternatively you can make your own using the recipe in Resource 8. See Resource 9 for ideas on how to use play dough to develop fine motor skills.

Develop the play dough sessions to make letter shapes with classes who are learning phonics.

You can make links to:
- **Physical Education** by encouraging fine motor skills;
- **Language and Literacy** by following instructions and making letter shapes; and
- **The Arts** by using modelling materials.

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**Cross Curricular Skills:**

**Communication**
- Be willing to join in
- Be able to learn from demonstration and modelling
- Learn to work and play co-operatively
- Develop confidence in being with adults and other pupils in a variety of contexts
- Use non-verbal methods to express ideas and engage with the listener

**Thinking Skill and Personal Capability:**

Generate possible solutions and try out alternative approaches
Clapping Rhymes
Use these with your pupils. Repeat them often, as pupils with special needs like lots of repetition.

Pat-a-Cake

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake baker’s man is a traditional nursery rhyme:

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake baker’s man.
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.
Roll it, pat it and mark it with “B”
And put it in the oven for Baby and me.

Accompany the rhyme by hand clapping with your pupils. You can replace the “B” with the initial of the pupil you are playing with, and use their name in the last line.

A Sailor Went to Sea Sea Sea

A sailor went to sea, sea, sea
To see what he could see, see, see
But all that he could see, see, see
Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea.
Round and Round the Garden

Round and round the garden
Like a teddy bear
One step, two step
And a tickly under there.

One Two Three Four Five

One, two, three, four, five
Once I caught a fish alive
Six, seven, eight, nine, ten
Then I let it go again
Why did you let it go?
Because it bit my finger so
Which finger did it bite?
This little finger on my right.
Visual Prompts for Throwing and Catching

throw

Resource 2
catch
marching
The Ants Go Marching

The ants go marching one by one, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching one by one, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching one by one,
The little one stops to suck his thumb
And they all go marching down to the ground
To get out of the rain, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The ants go marching two by two, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching two by two, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching two by two,
The little one stops to tie his shoe
And they all go marching down to the ground
To get out of the rain, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The ants go marching three by three, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching three by three, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching three by three,
The little one stops to climb a tree
And they all go marching down to the ground
To get out of the rain, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The ants go marching four by four, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching four by four, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching four by four,
The little one stops to shut the door
And they all go marching down to the ground
To get out of the rain, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The ants go marching five by five, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching five by five, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching five by five,
The little one stops to take a dive
And they all go marching down to the ground
To get out of the rain, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!
...The Ants Go Marching (continued)

The ants go marching six by six, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching six by six, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching six by six,
The little one stops to pick up sticks
And they all go marching down to the ground
To get out of the rain, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The ants go marching seven by seven, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching seven by seven, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching seven by seven,
The little one stops to pray to heaven
And they all go marching down to the ground
To get out of the rain, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The ants go marching eight by eight, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching eight by eight, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching eight by eight,
The little one stops to shut the gate
And they all go marching down to the ground
To get out of the rain, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The ants go marching nine by nine, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching nine by nine, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching nine by nine,
The little one stops to check the time
And they all go marching down to the ground
To get out of the rain, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The ants go marching ten by ten, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching ten by ten, hurrah, hurrah
The ants go marching ten by ten,
The little one stops to say “THE END”
And they all go marching down to the ground
To get out of the rain, BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!
The Grand Old Duke of York

The Grand old Duke of York,
He had ten thousand men.

He marched them up the hill,
(Everyone stands up)

And he marched them down again.
(Everyone sits down)

And when you’re up, you’re up,
(Everyone stands up)

And when you’re down, you’re down.
(Everyone sits down)

And when you’re only halfway up,
(Everyone crouch stand)

You’re neither up nor down.
stepping
jumping
tidy up
Play Dough
200g plain flour
100g salt
1 tbsp cooking oil
2 tsp cream of tartar
300ml water
Choice of food colouring

Mix flour, salt and cream of tartar together in a big saucepan. Add water gradually to remove lumps (Food colouring can be added to water or left to the end when you knead the dough). Put pan over a low-to-medium heat and cook, stirring constantly (It is hard work). The mixture will suddenly begin to thicken. Continue stirring until the dough becomes very stiff. Remove the pan from the heat. Scrape out the dough onto a smooth surface. Soak the pan immediately. Knead but take care – the dough will be very hot in the centre.

Store your dough in separate airtight containers and keep it in the fridge. The dough can be kept for up to two weeks and can be used many times.
Use visual cues, verbal instructions or physical prompts (according to individual needs) to encourage your pupils to participate in a range of play-dough activities that promote the use of the pincer grasp and fine motor control and strengthen the muscles in the hand and fingers.

Give each of your pupils a small ball of play dough and work through the guidelines below. Have them imitate your actions throughout the steps:

1) Have your pupils roll the dough using both hands into a long sausage shape.

2) Demonstrate to your pupils how to pinch off a small piece of dough from one end using your thumb and index finger.

3) Repeat pinching off pieces of dough until all the dough is in small pieces.

4) Roll each of the small pieces into a ball. Then squash each ball into pancakes using the palm of your hand.

5) Gather all the pancakes together, roll into a ball and start again.

6) Roll the dough into a sausage then, using the thumb and index finger (pincer grasp), pinch along the top of the dough forming a small ridge. Tell your pupils you are making a dinosaur.

7) Roll the dough back into a ball, then into a sausage.

8) Using one finger at a time (starting with the index finger) poke the dough sausage until it has a visible depression, then continue along the length of the dough. Roll it into a sausage again and then poke with another finger or with the index finger on your opposite hand.

9) Pull off small pieces of dough using your thumb and index finger, then roll into small balls using a pincer grasp motion. Pick up small pieces of dough using the pincer grasp and place back into the play dough box/bag.

10) Encourage your pupils to perform step 9.

11) Repeat all fine motor activities many times, reducing the amount of prompting as you observe your pupils becoming more independent. Allow some free play with dough at the end of the session if you have time.
To Be Me
Let’s Get Moving