

The BeActive Box:

This is a piece of equipment designed for blind babies or infants with visual impairment and severe learning difficulties. It is placed over the child, who will find, inside the box, lots of objects that feel and sound interesting and will encourage him or her to move, play and explore. The BeActive Box was originally designed because of difficulties with the original Lilli Nielson 'Little Room' design which was both bulky and difficult to put together. I approached a toy maker and asked him to make me a flat fold box which would look colourful and attractive. Together we came up with the BeActive Box, which has now been on the market for 3 years. RNIB has recently included it in their product guide.



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Research:

In 1996 questionnaires were sent to the first 60 purchasers of the BeActive Box asking for information about how the activity box was used and its benefits. This research elicited many interesting comments from teachers and parents who had used the box with children who had complex learning difficulties with visual impairment. This research suggests that its main benefit is the freedom and independence it brings these children.

One teacher wrote, 'Objects are accessible; always return when knocked; and can be grasped, swiped, observed and explored'. A parent wrote, 'for my child, she knows that when she moves her hand, the toy makes a noise'. The results of this questionnaire can be found in the 'Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness', April 1999 (published by the American Foundation for the Blind) Volume 93, No.4.