

Nicole-Hi, and welcome to the Adaptation Station Podcast. This is your host, Nicole. I'm a former special education teacher and currently an ABA therapist at a private center. This podcast is filled with tips and tricks for not only being the best special education teacher. You can be in the classroom, but living the best life you can live outside of the classroom as well after all, I'm all about balance. Hope you guys are excited. Let's jump on it.

I'd like to welcome Sofie onto the podcast. I'm so excited to have her here today to share lots of tips. If you haven't read her blog yet it is linked in the description of this podcast, but she's going to summarize some of it right now for us. So she loves to do science in her classroom, and she has a lot of great tips. And my first question for you, Sofie is in your blog, you talk about using a lot of real objects to make those abstract concepts more concrete. Where do you go to find these types of things affordably for your classroom?

Sofie-So I definitely first and foremost go to the dollar tree because you can truly find so many different, great things there. So there's two different sections that I always like to look in specifically for science things. The first is like the kitchen area. You can find so many amazing things that can be used for science. And so, um, just to name a few, you can get like the whisks, the spatulas, some of those tongs, they have Turkey basters, um, just all sorts of kitchen stuff that can be used for any sort of science activity, whether it's like a recipe or an experiment. And so the kitchen section is like my go to always. Um, and then also I like to look in the section where there's like vase fillers. So there's usually an aisle that has like glass jars and vases. And then next to that section, there's usually like little pebbles and sand and little seasonal trinkets. And so I always go there too, because I love to do sensory bins into my classroom. I love to incorporate science in sensory bins too. So that's always a go to section as well.

And everything's a dollar, so you don't have to spend a lot of money, but they really have a lot of really great, um, things there that you can look for. Um, and so some other things that I also, I could go on about the dollar tree obviously, but some other items that I have found there, um, just in various aisles are like magnifying glasses. Um, I've also seen like many plastic test tubes, uh, rubber gloves. Like literally I could go on and on sometimes even in the toy section, I'll find like rubber animal toys, which are so good. Like if you're talking about habitats or animal adaptations or like living and nonliving concepts. And so dollar tree is my go to, and then, um, also another place I love to go is honestly, just outside, like if you just go look in your backyard, you can find so many great things to make those abstract concepts very hands on and make those things like, kind of come alive for your students.

Like if you're talking about rocks and minerals, you can just go outside and get like a little dirt sample or get some rocks and have your kids explore those, like just in a little bin. Um, and it can be something so simple like that. And that's like a really great way just to incorporate a little bit more science, just exploring those like real life materials. So those would be my go tos, um, definitely the dollar tree and then just like look outside and see what you can find out there. So that's what I would do.

Nicole-That is awesome. And you just made me think of like so many more things, look at the dollar store. Like I would not have thought to wander into some of those Isles. So thank you so much for that tip!

Sofie- You're welcome.

Nicole-My next question is you talk about science related reinforcers. So what are your favorite ones to use in your classroom?

Sofie- So I am a big slime lover. Like I know not all teachers love slime because it gets messy, but anything sensory related, like just our kids just get so engaged with those sensory activities that I'm just a huge fan of slime is always my go to, but also sensory bins. And another thing that I forgot to mention that you can find at the dollar tree, those like baking trays, um, those are perfect for putting those messy items inside of to keep them contained a little bit more so that you don't have to make a huge mess. But if you think about it, anytime that you do like a sensory related activity, your kids are practicing science safety by, you know, not putting the items in their mouth or by taking turns and following your directions, cleaning those messy materials up that is all science related, cause it has to do with practicing science safety. And so having some of those ingredients that we use in sense of your activities, whether it's like sand or, you know, shaving cream, it all ties into practicing, safe science skills, um, which really applies to everyday life. And so some of the things that I like to do that are less messy, still messy, but less messy than slime would be like. Um, if we're working on the water cycle, I might do like water with water beads. And that way there's like a sensory thing tied into the water cycle, or I'll do like ice cubes with the water cycle because kids love to play with water. That water play is just like, I can tell they love it so much. And so I guess to answer your question, um, sensory related science activities are like my go to, and there's just so many skills that the kids are practicing whenever they're doing those.

Nicole-I love how you tied all that together with the science safety and the functional skills. And so many communication opportunities will naturally occur during that. So that is just awesome. And this is why I wanted you to come on the podcast because you have so much knowledge to share. I feel for anybody listening, who maybe hasn't tried science in their classroom yet, like a hands on science experiment, cause they've been a little bit nervous. What would you recommend as like the first lesson to try?

Sofie-Definitely States of matter, because I talked about this a little bit in the last question, but it doesn't require a lot of prep. Um, and it is very visual. It's such an abstract concept that is very visual because as long as you have water and a freezer, kids can visually see the before and after of what is happening to the water. And then of course, like kids love to play with the water. So you can practice, you know, drawing pictures of the water before and the water after. And then, um, you can also make some predictions with your kiddos. Um, and honestly like just playing with the water is such an enticing thing to, you know, attract them to science a little bit more. And so definitely I would start with States of matter and just like the google what happens to water when it's frozen lesson.

Nicole-Awesome. I love that idea. And my last one is, do you have any other tips for teachers who might want to try science in their classroom?

Sofie-So I just want to say that like, if you have never taught science because it's a little bit intimidating and messy, that is totally okay. Like I didn't even want to think about science my first year teaching because it's so abstract and there's so many other skills that I want to teach. Um, and I was so nervous just to get messy with all the materials and my kids would eat everything. Um, it's totally fine to feel this

way. Definitely just start small and don't feel like you have to spend a lot of money because truly like if you just take a step back and look around science is just all around us and can be applied like so much to everyday life. So don't be intimidated by science. Just start small with the good old ice cube lesson. Um, and I think that you will also become more motivated as you see how intrigued your kids are in science.

Nicole-Awesome. And Sophie has a great blog, like I mentioned, with tons of pictures. So if you want to visualize what she's talking about, just click the link in the description of my podcast and thank you so much for being here.

Sofie- You're welcome. Thank you so much for having me.

Nicole-Thank you for listening to this week's episode of the podcast. If you like what you heard, I would greatly appreciate it if you love me some feedback. And if you want to hear more, go ahead and give me a follow while you're at it. Come say hi on social media, you can find me at adaptation station on Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, and adaptations station.net. It's taco night in my house. So I'm going to go have a delicious dinner and a margarita. And I will talk to you guys again next Friday.