

# Help Sheet

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching & Support Service

## How to use a sensory circuit to support a child to be ready to learn.



### Why?

- This help sheet explains how ‘Sensory Circuits’ can support children to be alert and focus their attention prior to a focused activity.
- A sensory circuit can support children who may appear slow to engage or lethargic to be energised, alert and ready to learn.
- A sensory circuit can support help an active child to transition from active play to a focussed or calm task.
- Sensory circuits can also support the development of motor skills and co-ordination.
- A sensory circuit is a short but regular intervention which takes up to 10 minutes. It is best done before a focused activity e.g. before a carpet time or adult led activity.
- A small group of children with similar needs can take part in a sensory circuit together. By doing the fun activities in order, the sensory input helps the child(ren) to be well regulated and ready to learn.

### You will need:

- Equipment set up in a large space e.g. hall or outside.
- A practitioner to lead the group.

### How?

**Alerting** - The session starts with a highly active, alerting activity. This helps to energise a lethargic child or start the session at the pace of an active child. The child should be able to move freely within a controlled activity. The adult needs to model the activity being motivating and enthusiastic.

**Try** - Running between two points, jumping, bouncing on a trampette / space hopper, or spinning.

**Organising** - The middle of the session introduces activities that require more sensory processing, balance or timing. It helps the child to organise their body and co-ordinate their

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movements.

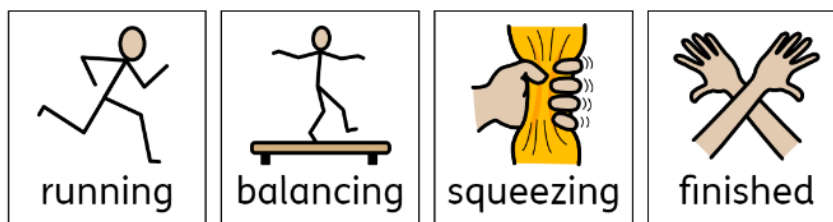
**Try** - Balancing and climbing, rolling, riding a bike / tricycle, sitting or lying on a balance ball, throwing at a target, copying a simple routine with pompoms, following an obstacle course, walking along a chalk trail or stepping stones, Simon Says or commando crawling.

**Calming** – The final session focusses on calming activities.

**Try** - Rolling up in a blanket or lying under a weighted blanket, laying on a beanbag or under cushions, squeezing a pillow, gentle swinging or rocking, crawling through a tunnel, sucking a thick drink or yoghurt through a straw, listening to calming music or doing a short children's yoga activity.

### Using an active timetable alongside sensory circuit activities:

- Velcro the three activities on a board with a 'finished' box or wallet at the end.
- Show the child(ren) the first activity.
- When the activity has finished peel it off and put it in the finished box / wallet.
- Repeat this for each activity.



### Things to note:

- Have the equipment ready for all three parts before you start.
- Use visuals alongside simplified language to communicate the activities.
- Model the activities – some children may need to watch before they feel confident to join in.
- When deciding the length of each section follow the child(ren)'s lead.

### Reference / Evidence base – informed by:

Theories of sensory processing and sensory integration.