

# Help Sheet

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

## How to make sensory adjustments in Early Years.



### Why?

- To support children who have sensory preferences.
- To have resources or areas for children who seek out sensory experiences e.g. spinning, looking at lights, banging to make a loud noise, messy play.
- To have resources or areas for children who avoid sensory input e.g. covering ears, moving away from busy areas or places with strong smells.

### You will need:

- To observe the cohort to identify what children seek out and what children avoid – think about sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing and movement.
- To talk to the child's parent/carer about what the child likes and dislikes at home.
- To create areas or provide resources to meet the needs of the cohort.

### How?

#### Ideas for children who seek sensory input.

- Messy play – sand, water, finger paint, shaving foam, jelly, slime, mud.
- Tactile toys and objects e.g. pinecones, spiky balls, vibrating toys.
- Visually stimulating toys e.g. spinning or light-up toys, torches or mirrors, sensory bottles.
- Noisy toys and percussion instruments.
- Strongly flavoured snacks or chewy toys dipped in strong flavours.
- Smell pots or scented playdough.
- Blankets to wrap themselves up in and cushions or teddies to hug.
- Places to climb, jump, rock or spin.

#### Ideas for children who avoid sensory input.

- Space to sit or play away from others.

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- Low lighting, neutral colours, no dangling items and displays contained within display boards.
- Quiet areas of the classroom, no background music and ear muffs / defenders.
- Try to avoid strong smells especially in bathrooms and dinner halls – open a window or sit near a door.
- A calm area, den or pop-up tent.

### Things to note:

- Children may seek some sensory experiences and avoid others e.g. a child may like strong smells and flavours but avoid bright lights.
- A sensory profile can be used to identify a child's sensory preferences.



### Reference / Evidence base – informed by:

Olga Bogdashina- Sensory perceptual issues in autism and Asperger syndrome 2016

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/sensory-differences/sensory-differences/all-audiences>