

Sensory Supports

Use this Tip Sheet as a guide for implementing sensory supports in your program.

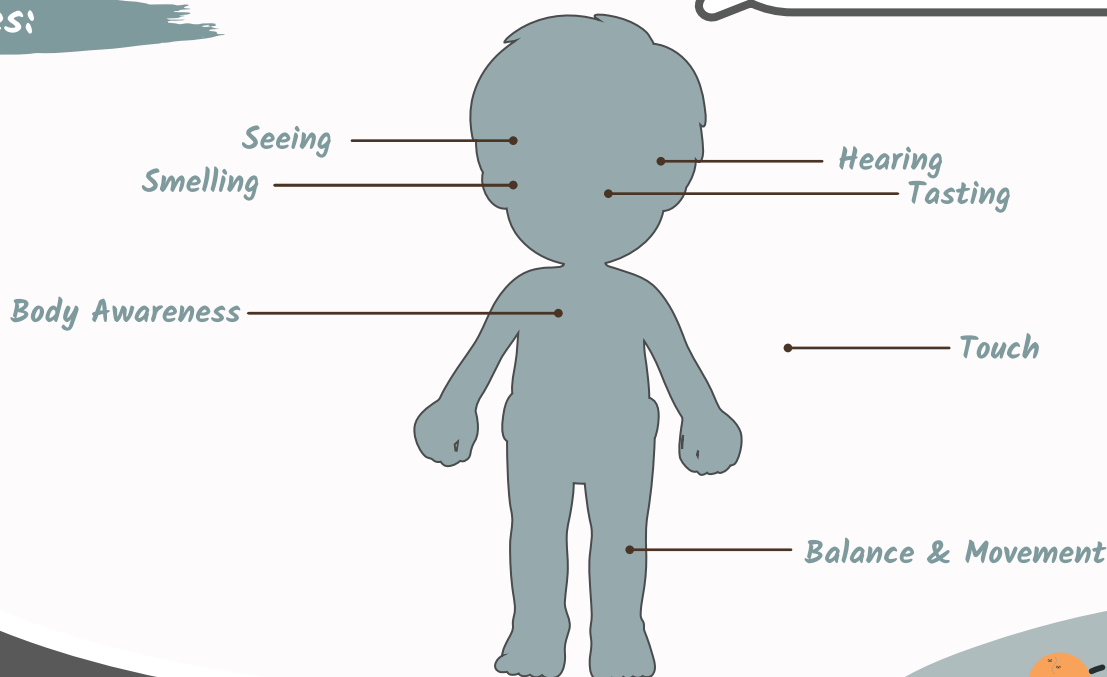
Why do some kids need sensory supports?

We all take in millions of bits of sensory information every day. Some of us have a balanced sensory intake; some need MORE sensory stimulation while some need LESS sensory stimulation. One, many, or all of our senses can be affected, and it may make us clumsy or confused or feel unsafe. The way a child takes in sensory information can impact behavior, learning, relationships, and development.

What are sensory supports?

Activities, items, or adaptations that help children interpret the world around them more easily and comfortably.

Our Senses:



Warning! Sensory Roadblock!

It's important to remember that if a child is experiencing sensory overload (or underload), they may have difficulty following instructions, paying attention, or interacting with peers.

This sensory imbalance can create a roadblock, and you'll need to work with the youth to get them "unblocked" before they move through the rest of their day.



Activities to Overcome Sensory Roadblocks



Un-Paint: For kids seeking extra touch sensations, you can use different mushy, slimy, and gooey materials to give them more sensory input. Use shaving cream, hand lotion, damp sand, or mud and encourage children to draw numbers, letters, and shapes.



No-Mess Messy Play: On the other hand, you may have kids in your program who dislike messy or slimy textures. Use sealable plastic bags, fill with paint or foam or lotion, and duct tape the top. Encourage youth to draw letters and shapes through the bag or have them mix two colors or textures inside the bag.



Yoga: Arranging the body in different ways supports body awareness. Kidsyogastories.com offers posters, and over 58 illustrated poses that kids love.



Stretch Bands: The use of resistance strengthens the body position sense. Have multiple resistance bands of varying strength available. In a pinch, you can use tights or panty hose. Ask children to show the different ways they can stretch their bands: above their heads, diagonally, behind their backs, and encourage them to mimic each other's movements.



Go Fishing: Children match the magnet on the end of a string to the paperclip on the mouth of a cardboard fish. This game supports visual-motor development.

Sound Match: Fill plastic Easter eggs with different items: dried beans, rice, coins, small pieces of paper, etc. Have children shake the eggs and guess what is inside. Listening and guessing the items will help with sound identification and memory.

References:
Kranowitz, C. S. (2006). The out-of-sync child has fun: Activities for kids with sensory processing disorder (Rev. ed.). New York, N.Y.: Perigee Book.

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