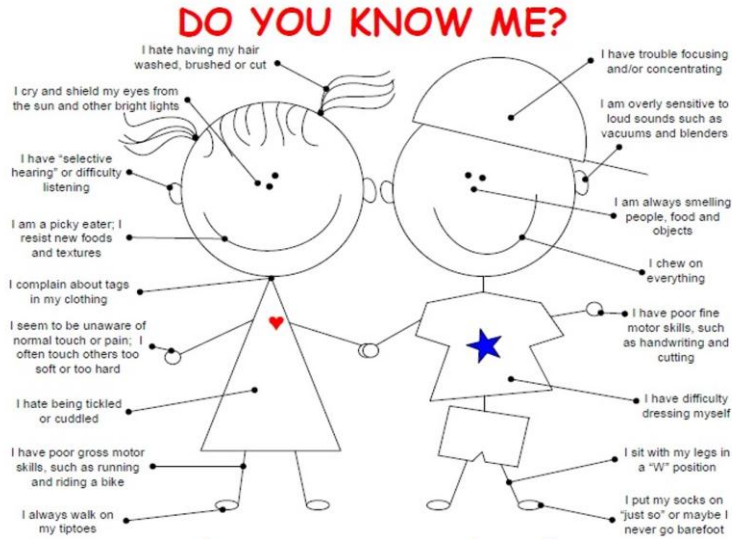


# Sensory Circuits



Understanding sensory preferences and supporting children within their learning environment

# Likes & Dislikes = Sensory Preferences

Our likes and dislikes are our **sensory preferences**.

We all have sensory preferences.

We can happily live with our preferences having very little impact on our daily lives.

We make decisions everyday with our sensory preferences in mind, for example, choices we make about foods we eat, clothing we wear or places we visit.

# What can shape our Sensory Development?

## **Past experiences**

- What experiences has the child had?
- Positive and negative experiences?
- What are the experiences of the caregivers and how may these have been projected onto the child?
- Do they dislike mess, certain food etc.

## **Possible opportunities**

- What opportunities for sensory development is the child currently offered?
- What further opportunities could be offered which could be beneficial?

## **Safety and security**

- Are experiences being offered in an appropriate and safe way to the age and stage of development for that child?
- Are experiences fun and motivating or frightening?

# Sensory movement breaks

- Can reduce undesirable behaviours
- Reduces chances of feeling overloaded
- Improved emotional regulation
- Increased motivation
- Inclusion and co-operation
- To help stay alert and focus
- Every 30-60 minutes a two minute break, schedule throughout the day
- Individual or whole class activity



# Examples of sensory breaks

- Access something from a sensory 'tool-kit' box
- Time in a sensory calming area
- Doing a physical activity



## Sensory tool-kit or box

This could be a box, drawer or tray of different sensory items – some calming and some stimulating so that children can pick the item that will support them the most in the situation

- Different supports for pupils to use when feeling overwhelmed or anxious
- Also help with self regulation
- Can provide proprioceptive/auditory/oral motor or visual support
- Help to keep hands busy

## Within a sensory tool kit

Items you can include are:

- Calming tools to suit their needs and interests
- Fidget tools
- Activity cards
- Noise cancelling headphones
- Visual toys
- Weighted cushion



# Sensory calming areas

These can contain:

- Large beanbag: child can lie underneath, or sit in/on
- Listening to calming music through headphones
- Soft lights
- Water/glitter tubes
- Cushions/pillows
- Items to explore in hands





## Physical activities - sensory circuits

Sensory circuits can provide structured sensory motor input. They:

- Facilitate sensory processing
- Develop physical skills
- Increase focus and attention
- Increase ability to settle down to work
- Can be used in the morning when children come into school and can be used throughout the day

# Sensory Circuit



# Sensory circuits

Sensory circuits have 3 sections:

- **Alerting** (stimulation) – bouncing on an exercise ball, loud fast paced music, jumping up and down, jumping into pillows/large beanbag, skipping etc.
- **Organising** (multi-sensory processing, body awareness) – throwing to target, balancing, hopping, climbing, animal walks, step-in stones, crawling through tunnels, wall push ups, moving over/along apparatus (benches, hoops), balance on cushions, soft play bricks, etc.
- **Calming** (so children leave calm and centred) – squish with large ball, weighted blanket, weighted cushion/snake, massage/pressure, etc.

## Other physical activities for a sensory break

- Bounce on/lie over exercise ball
- Dance
- Jog
- Play 'Simon Says'
- Sort objects into containers
- Use indoor/outdoor equipment



# What is a sensory / movement break?

What is a MOVEMENT BREAK? | Brain Break | Sensory