



Inclusion and Engagement Support Team GEMs- Good Engagement Methods

GEM's has been put together to demonstrate good engagement methods and practise to support CYP with SEND.

As specialist teachers, we wanted to produce approaches to address and support some of the core challenges that professionals will encounter within their classrooms from CYP with SEND.

Within this package, you will find advice which has been designed to increase knowledge of Sensory Sensitivity and Processing Disorder and how you can support CYP who experience difficulties in the school environment as a result.

This package is versatile and offers advice to both primary and secondary settings that can be adapted to suit your school and pupil's needs.

SENSORY

Some CYP struggle to correctly perceive the sensory world around them. CYP may experience difficulties relating to one or multiple senses. Sensory sensitivities can co-occur in CYP with Autism. However, many CYP with Sensory needs are not on the Autistic spectrum.

People might think that there are 5 senses, when in fact there are 7.

Sight (Vision)

Taste (Gustatory)

Hearing (Auditory)

Touch (Tactile)

Smell (Olfactory)



Vestibular (Movement) – The movement and balance sense

The main components of the vestibular system are found in the inner ear.

It gives our brain information about where our head and body are, it helps us stay upright when we sit, stand and walk, monitors spatial orientation and functions that allow us to keep our balance. The vestibular system is essential for normal movement and equilibrium.

Proprioception (Body position) – This is the body awareness sense

This tells us where our body parts are in relation to each other. It gives us information about how much force to use.

Sensory processing difficulties

There are two main types of sensory processing difficulties, and many CYP may experience a combination of the two.

Some CYP are **hypersensitive** which means they are oversensitive to the information that comes in through their senses. This can lead to them avoiding certain noises or sensations because they find them too overwhelming.

[Sensory Sensitivity and Hypersensitivity - Bing video](#)

Some CYP are **hyposensitive** which means they are undersensitive. This causes CYP to become sensory seeking (they look for more sensory stimulation). This may result in CYP feeling a need to move around more often.

[What is Sensory Seeking and Hyposensitivity? - Bing video](#)

Sensory needs can present in a variety of ways and can result in behavioural issues as well as functional difficulties.

Sensory needs you might see in the classroom include:

- Poor posture
- Poor handwriting
- A dislike of loud noises
- A dislike of bright lights
- Being fidgety
- Being easily distracted
- Difficulties in making friends
- Difficulty controlling movements
- Difficulty sleeping

- Difficulty eating
- Difficulty getting dressed
- Frequently throwing tantrums
- Poor special awareness
- The urge to lick or touch things
- Difficulty with fine and gross motor skills
- Having a high or low pain threshold
- Dramatic mood swings and tantrums
- A dislike of getting messy
- Impulsivity
- Suffering from low self-esteem
- Sensory meltdowns

These difficulties can have a profound effect on a CYP's ability to complete everyday tasks independently and may also result in a display of frustration and challenging behaviour.

Some of the suggestions below can be used to help support CYP who may be displaying Sensory needs in their education setting. They can be used and adapted to make a positive difference to CYP with a Sensory profile and their engagement in school.

Activity	Resources
<p>Build a sensory profile Carry out a sensory audit of the CYP to identify their sensory difficulties. Carry out with staff who know the CYP well and include the CYP at an appropriate level.</p> <p>Carry out a Sensory audit of the classroom and school environment A sensory classroom/school audit will enable teachers and other staff to create an environment that supports CYPs who are experiencing Sensory difficulties to best meet their needs and improve their concentration. Small changes to an environment can significantly contribute to improving Sensory regulation.</p> <p>Following these audits explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use of softer lighting ○ Minimise display stimulus ○ Change smartboard background ○ Turn off fans/projectors when not in use ○ Declutter working areas ○ Organised/structured classroom environment 	<p>Exploring Sensory Profiles - Autism Education Trust</p> <p>37.2-Sensory-assessment-checklist.pdf (aetraininghubs.org.uk)</p> <p>A Day in the Life of a Child with Sensory Processing Struggles (SPD) Brain Balance - Bing video</p> <p>Link to a Sensory audit Sensory Processing (sendco.co.uk)</p> <p>37.1-Sensory-audit-tool-for-environments.pdf (middletownautism.com)</p> <p>Some examples found on this link tool-44-Environment-checklist.pdf</p>

What can help a CYP with Sensory sensitivities?

Develop a Sensory diet

When creating a sensory diet work alongside the families and other professionals. If an OT is already working with the child then liaise with them. By working with the family, the Sensory Diet can begin as soon as the CYP gets up in the morning.

When planning the sensory diet, it is important to think about the CYP's individual needs. What works for one CYP won't necessarily work for another.

It is essential to think about the sensory need of any of the CYP's behaviours and not try to take away a strategy that works for them without having something to replace it i.e. if getting out of their seat and walking around the classroom helps them to concentrate but you need to change it because it is disruptive, then give them regular movement breaks as part of their sensory diet. It is essential to consider what sensory experience are they seeking? If they are on task does it need to be changed and if so, what can it be changed for that is socially acceptable?

Sensory diets should include the opportunity to move on a regular basis and have a combination of both sensory stimulating and calming activities (stimulating followed by calming) to begin to teach CYPs strategies to regulate their sensory load.

Effective Sensory diets are tailored to the CYP's needs and have

[What is a Sensory Diet? - Bing video](#)

[What Is A Sensory Diet With Examples \(Free PDF Template Download\) | Senso Minds](#)

An example of a Sensory Diet for teenagers and adults (scroll to the end for the Sensory diet example)

[Microsoft Word - Template Sensory Diet Adults.docx \(misophoniainternational.com\)](#)

Example of what may be included in a Sensory Diet:

8.10am Susan has 5 mins jumping on a small trampoline in the house

8.25am Susan rides her scooter to school

8.50am Susan has a quiet space to watch lava lamps/do a puzzle or read quietly

10.15am Susan chooses Sensory movement cards and completes the activities

1pm Susan has access to a quiet space to watch lava lamps/fish

2.30pm Susan pets and walks the school therapy dog

3.30pm Susan rides her scooter home


4pm Susan has a cold drink through a straw whilst listening to some calming music before starting her homework

8pm Susan completes Yoga exercises before bed

Susan has a stretchy band around her chair at school that she can kick/push against when she feels like she needs to move.

<p>elements that can be easily incorporated into their normal routine.</p>	<p>Classroom Sensory Break Activities - Activity Cards (twinkl.co.uk) A handy set of activity cards showing a variety of classroom sensory break activities or exercises suitable for Sensory Brain Breaks.</p> <p>Sensory Cards (twinkl.co.uk) A selection of activities to encourage sensory play.</p>
<p>Sensory diet activities for Movement can include:</p> <p>Walking Stairs Running Jumping Rolling Marching Hopping Pushing e.g. pram, large ball Mini trampoline Rocking e.g. Row your boat Push ups (floor or wall) Riding a bike/scooter Playing catch Kicking a ball</p> <p>Generally rhythmic movement is calming, and erratic movement is arousing.</p>	<p>Movement breaks Sensory movement breaks tips for success at school and home (griffinot.com)</p> <p>Sensory Diet Activities for the Classroom - The OT Toolbox</p> <p>Grab and Go Brain Break Cards (twinkl.co.uk)</p>
<p>Sensory diet activities for Deep Pressure/Touch can include:</p> <p>Finger painting Arts/crafts Water play Back scratching Fidget toys Texture book Playing with stuffed toys Petting a dog Play-doh Sand play Balloon tennis</p>	<p>Sensory Playdough Recipe Pack Perfect for EYFS and SEND (twinkl.co.uk) Encourage children to explore each of their five senses as they play with the different types of sensory playdough. This is a fantastic resource pack to use with early years children to help them learn about their senses, or for children with SEND who are sensory learners.</p> <p>Examples can be found at:</p> <p>Push Pop Bubble Sensory Fidget Toy, Autism & Special Needs Stress Reliever Toy, Extrusion Push Bubble Popping Game, Anxiety Relief Toys for Kids & Adults (3PCS) : Amazon.co.uk: Toys & Games</p> <p>Fidget Toys Set, Ysoazgle 23 Pcs Sensory Toys Set Relieves Stress and Anxiety Fidget Toy for Children Adults, special Toy Assortment for</p>

<p>Weighted blanket</p> <p>Weighted Blankets work by applying weight across the body - known as Weighted Therapy. This weight stimulates the Proprioceptive System, the awareness of our body's position and movement, through deep touch pressure. Stimulating this system helps the body feel more grounded, calm and relaxed. This is very important for CYPs with Sensory Processing Disorder, as they often seek out deep pressure sensations to help them feel more secure and relaxed. Once the body is in a more relaxed state, restlessness and agitation is reduced.</p>	<p>Birthday Party Favor, Carnival, Anti-Anxiety Tools for Autism : Amazon.co.uk: Toys & Games</p> <p>Examples can be found at:</p> <p>Amazon.co.uk : weighted blanket</p> <p>Sensory Direct Deep Pressure Vest - Black, Bear Hug for Sensory Integration, Autism, ASD, Asperger's & Sensory Processing Disorder Suitable for Kids & Adults Medium : Amazon.co.uk: Health & Personal Care</p>
<p>Sensory diet activities for Auditory can include:</p> <p>Identifying/labelling sounds White noise machine Singing/humming/whistling/blowing whistles Playing musical instruments/clapping Using headphones/ear plugs to cancel out sound Younger children might bang on pots/pans</p>	<p>Brain Break Chat Cards Activity - Key Stage 4 Entry Level (twinkl.co.uk)</p> <p>Grab and Go Brain Break Cards (twinkl.co.uk)</p> <p>Examples can be found at:</p> <p>limewie 2 Pack Rainmaker Kids Mini Education Rainmaker Toys Rain Stick Shaker Music Sensory Auditory Instrument Toy for Child. : Amazon.co.uk: Toys & Games</p> <p>Magic Cube Electronic Music Cube Novelty Puzzle Game for Teens Kids PZ-MF : Amazon.co.uk: Toys & Games</p>
<p>Sensory diet activities for Vision can include:</p> <p>Lava lamps Tinted lenses if sensitive to bright light Games/activities that will help to develop visual skills e.g. colouring/drawing, dot to dots and mazes Having no complicated prints/patterns in the environment</p>	<p>6 Hour Lava Lamp Video Screensaver - HD 1080P 🎧 - Bing video</p> <p>ASPECT 90cm Colour Changing LED Bubble Fish Lamp Sensory Mood Light Novelty Bubbles Water Tube Aquarium Standing Tower Stylish Lamp with Base Artificial Tropical Fish : Amazon.co.uk: Lighting</p>

<p>Having a small selection of items available to avoid visual overload Looking at a fish tank</p>	<p>The Best 4K Aquarium for Relaxation II  Relaxing Oceanscapes - Sleep Meditation 4K UHD Screensaver - Bing video</p>
<p>Sensory diet activities for Smell/Taste/Oral Comforting can include:</p> <p>Essential oils/scented candles (think about safety) Smelling flowers/herbs (avoid lavender and tea tree oil as studies have shown that they may cause hormonal imbalances in young boys) Blindfold smelling game Exploring different tastes e.g. sweet/spicy/salty/sour Exploring different textures e.g. crunchy/chewy/juicy/creamy/lumpy Blowing bubbles Sucking a thick liquid through a straw Sucking a lollipop Using an age appropriate 'chewy'</p>	<p>15 SCENT-sational Sensory Activities for Kids - Fun-A-Day!</p> <p>6 Pcs Building Block Pencil Cap Sensory Chew,Chew Bundle for Kids with ADHD,Teething,Anxiety,Biting Needs,Oral Sensory Chew Toys,Silicone Chewy Block Pen Case : Amazon.co.uk: Baby Products</p> <p>Sensory chew Necklace Set (3-Pack) Made from Food Grade Silicone Safety for Kids Teething, Silicone Chewy Sticks for Autistic, ADHD,Oral Motor Boys and Girls Children : Amazon.co.uk: Baby Products</p>
<p>What are the benefits of sensory games?</p> <p>Taking a break to play sensory games in class can have lots of benefits including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving CYPs time to re-focus so that they can pay better attention in their next lesson • helping to improve co-ordination and physical development <p>helping CYPs to calm down if they are feeling overwhelmed</p>	<p>Sensory Break Game Worksheet - Sensory Games Resources (twinkl.co.uk)</p> <p>This game is particularly good at developing fine and gross motor skills.</p> <p>Amazon.co.uk: Gutter Games: Beat That!</p>
<p>SENSORY CIRCUITS</p> <p>Sensory circuits are a beneficial way to start the day for CYPs who have Sensory Processing Disorder.</p>	<p>0218 - Sensory Circuits - Info for teachers - April 2018 (cambcommunityservices.nhs.uk)</p> <p>PD-CAMHS3-20-Sensory-circuits.pdf (dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk)</p>

Sensory circuits involve **3 types of activities** which when used in order can be very effective in supporting CYPs to improve their levels of attention and focus. 5 minutes for each section should be sufficient although some CYPs might need more time in the alerting section and others more time in the calming section to get them ready for class.

ALERTING

To provide vestibular stimulation which prepares the brain for learning and the demands of the school environment e.g. skipping, marching, jumping jacks etc...

ORGANISING

To provide situations to increase focus, attention span and performance. These are activities that require multi-sensory processing and balance e.g. balancing, climbing, throwing into a target etc...

CALMING

To ensure that CYPs are calm and ready to learn. Examples of activities include ball squashing, rocking, deep hand pressure etc...

N.B. Have all the equipment ready for each section before you begin.

With thanks to St Augustine's RC Primary School, Preston.

Example of a movement break floor decal.



With thanks to St Richard's RC Primary School, Skelmersdale.

SENSORY STORIES

Sensory Stories can open up new avenues for communication and inclusive learning.

[Sensory Stories English Primary Resources - - Curriculum Support - SEND \(twinkl.co.uk\)](https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/english/primary-resources/sensory-stories-english-primary-resources)

<p>Sensory stories involve using a range of stories alongside a variety of items which are designed to stimulate a CYP's senses. They are an effective way of supporting pupils to engage with a storytelling experience and develop their listening and responding skills.</p> <p>For CYPs with SPD Sensory stories can provide a fun way of encountering sensory experiences and triggers in a safe, repetitive way, which over time can help to reduce associated anxieties.</p> <p>Social stories and comic strip conversations may be useful.</p>	<p>Teaching Assistant Sensory Needs Resource Pack (twinkl.co.uk)</p> <p>This includes some sensory stories for younger children including 'We're going on a bear hunt' and 'The three little pigs'.</p> <p>Sensory Stories for Children and Teens with Special Educational Needs: A Practical Guide : Joanna Grace: Amazon.co.uk: Books</p> <p>Refer to the Autism GEMs.</p>
<p>Recommended Reads</p> <p>Sensory Circuits: A Sensory Motor Skills Programme for Children by Jane Horwood.</p> <p>The Whole Spectrum of Social, Motor, and Sensory Games: Using Every Child's Natural Love of Play to Enhance Key Skills and Promote Inclusion by Barbara Sher</p> <p>A link to a selection of the most popular books about Sensory Processing Disorder Most Popular Books About Sensory Processing Disorder (thesensoryspectrum.com)</p> <p>Are You Feeling Cold, Yuki?: A Story to Help Build Interoception and Internal Body Awareness for Children with Special Needs, including those with ASD, PDA, SPD, ADHD and DCD eBook : Al-Ghani, Kay, Al-Ghani, Haitham: Amazon.co.uk: Kindle Store</p>	

Examples of Sensory equipment/resources that can be homemade or purchased



