

Using sensory preferences to offer re-assurance and create a sense of calm

Sensory Calming Ideas for the Early Years



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Our senses are closely linked to our state of wellbeing.

We all use our senses at some point to destress and offer relaxation. This can take many forms from the informal: 'Counting to 5', 'savouring a slice of cake', 'smelling the coffee'; to actively practicing relaxation techniques including: Yoga, Pilates, Mindfulness, Deep-Breathing, Massage, Aromatherapy etc.

Even from the womb, babies get re-assurance from listening to their mothers heart beat and hearing familiar voices that continues to offer comfort to the baby following birth.

Everyone has different sensory needs and preferences. Some people get comfort from being hugged or enjoy a massage; while for others, this would cause anxiety and they would rather listen to music or go for a walk.

For some people their Sensory Processing can be over or under responsive and they brain interprets sensory experiences differently. This can reflect in their behaviour as they can become sensitive to sensory over stimulation or require increased sensory input to address their sensory diet needs. For more information on Sensory Processing explore the links at the end of this document.

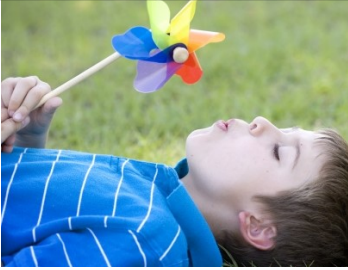
Getting to know and understand your family's sensory needs and preferences can help you to identify calming activities that can provide sensory input that offers comfort and security: reducing anxiety and distressed behaviours.

Below are some Sensory Calming Ideas, Creating Calm Environment Suggestions, Calming Sound Selection and Yoga Activities. Why not join in and see if you can identify what sensory activities work best for you, as well as your child!

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Using the senses to create a sense of calm!

Interceptive Breathing Activities – children who benefit from slowing down their breathing



Windmills, Bubbles, Dandelion Seeds, Leaves, Ping Pong Balls, Feathers,

Sight / Visual Activities – for children who calm or are distracted by focusing on visual objects



Cloud Watching, Water and Glycerine Bottles, Books, Spinning Activities

Smell / Olfactory Activities – for children who get comfort from reassuring scent triggers



Comforting smells from around the home, relaxing smells e.g. in scented playdough, essential oils in a burner etc. environmental smells

Taste/Gustatory Activities – For children who are reassured by the sucking/chewing action



Drinking thick liquids through straws, Chewy Toys, Party Blowers, Whistles, Eating Chewy or Crunchy Foods

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Sound/Auditory Activities – For children take comfort from rhythm and sound



Ticking Clocks, Musical Toys / Familiar Song / Action Rhymes, Intensive Interaction

Touch / Tactile Activities – For children who relax with touch



Fidget Toys, Sensory Walls, Tac Pac, Deep Pressure, Massage

Body Movements/Vestibular System: Focusing on balance and coordination brings a sense of calm



Balancing Activities, Spinning Activities, Swings, Dancing, Jumping, Running

Body Awareness/Proprioception: Hard work and burning off lots of energy to promote calm



Strong Supportive Hugs, Physical Activities, Carrying heavy objects, Pushing and Pushing Activities

Creating calm environments!



'Safe Spaces' - Tents, Outdoor Dens, Under Tables, Sensory Rooms, Bedrooms, Bare Rooms that don't over stimulate the senses, Book Corners



'Outdoor Areas' –Gardens, Parks & Play Areas, Forests, Getting out for walks, large open spaces



'Water Play'– Bath Play, Water Trays, Jumping in muddy puddles, Watching Taps Run, Using Watering Cans Outdoors



'Tactile Areas'– Activity walls, Activity Tiles, Weighted or Textured Blankets & Cushions with: Tags, Lights, Vibrations, Wobble, Activities, Textures, Beans, Sequins, soft toys



Creative Areas – Having the opportunity to draw, make marks in sand, play with paint, handle playdough, explore tactile play e.g. Spaghetti, rice, foams etc.

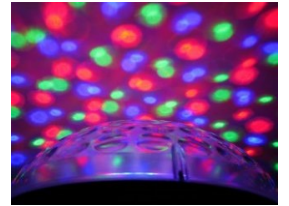


Being 'Alongside Animals – Stroking, Handling, Watching, Caring for, Building Trust, Giving a sense of responsibility.

Calming Relaxation Music / Sounds

- Sensory Soothing Visual Therapy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xir91dOrO64>



- Relaxing Tunnel Sensory Visual Therapy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLRgUMGjxxc>



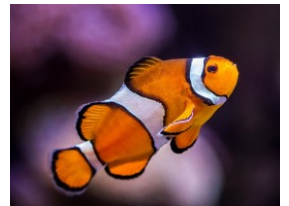
- Singing Birds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7dYd-Ra8bk>



- Stunning Aquarium & The Best Relaxation Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-j2uKUK5P10>



- Nature Sounds Ocean Waves

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MD0tXdSsnBA>



- Relaxing Music and Rain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYkJED5mZgM>



- White Noise Sounds – Vacuum Cleaner

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ry36Nc6wpHs>



yoga



CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) Have put together some Yoga Programmes that you can enjoy together with your little one. Each session includes a facilitators guide which offers additional information on how each Yoga Pose can support your child's sensory development. Click on the links below for more information.

<https://services.nhslothian.scot/camhs/Resources/Relaxation/Yoga%20Programme%20Level%201.docx>

<https://services.nhslothian.scot/camhs/Resources/Relaxation/Standing%20Yoga%20Programme%20Level%201.doc>

For further Yoga Programmes, or to find out more about CAMHS, click on the link <https://services.nhslothian.scot/camhs/>

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References and Further Links

For More Information on Sensory Processing:

[Our EIGHT senses](#) [The Proprioception System](#) [The vestibular system!](#)

[Sensory Develop\making-sense-of-your-sensory-behaviour - Falkirk Council.pdf](#)

For More Sensory Calming Activities:

[https://services.nhsllothian.scot/camhs/Resources/Pages/ResourcePacks.aspx#Children and Young People Autism Neurodevelopmental Disorders Learning Disability](https://services.nhsllothian.scot/camhs/Resources/Pages/ResourcePacks.aspx#Children_and_Young_People_Autism_Neurodevelopmental_Disorders_Learning_Disability)

<https://sensoryprocessingdisorderparentsupport.com/sensory-calming-activities.php>