

Creating a Sensory Stimulation Kit

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Sensory stimulation kits can be a tool for children with sensory integration disorders, seizure disorders, or for coma stimulation after experiencing a traumatic brain injury. Parents, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and teachers can use items to encourage responses from children, expose them to a new feeling (sensation), or decrease a dislike, to a particular sensation. The kit should include a variety of items to stimulate all 5 five senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell.



Using a sensory stimulation kit with toddlers and preschoolers also helps them explore their world. A parent or therapist can use the items to encourage movement and/or language. A teacher may use one item from the kit as a writing or expressive language prompt in school-age children (e.g., “Describe this item.” “How would you use it?” “What is its function?”). A therapist can use a sensory stimulation kit as a screener to see if a child is developing appropriately.

Before using sensory stimulation kits for therapeutic purposes, I recommend that you always consult a speech-language pathologist or occupational therapist first. Ask the therapist how long to expose the child to the stimulus and the appropriate level of intensity. Inappropriate stimulation can be dangerous for children with disorders. For example, if a child experiences difficulty swallowing thin liquids, exposing him/her to sour tastes may cause an increase in saliva and may create a choking hazard. Or, if a child overreacts (is hypersensitive) to touch, using a massager on its highest setting may cause a negative (aversive) behavior. **Remember, always consult a therapist before initiating a sensory stimulation program.**

Sound

- Loud noise makers (e.g., whistle, cow bell, cymbals)
- Familiar voices and conversation
- Music
- Auditory feedback device
- Environmental sounds

Touch

- Temperatures (e.g., hot/cold)
- Textured fabric (e.g., soft and hard side of Velcro®, feathers)
- Massagers (with varying speeds and/or textured attachments)
- Textured balls
- Textured foods (e.g., crackers, pudding, licorice)
- Modeling clay
- Sand
- Brushes

Vision

- Black and white / color photographs (actions, family, friends, and pets)
- Pictures of different shapes and colors
- Moving objects

Smell

Present smells while child's mouth is closed.

- Familiar scents (e.g., mother's perfume, shower gels, air fresheners)
- Contrasting scents (sweet vs. pungent)
- Odors of foods (e.g., citrus, coffee, onion, garlic)
- Oils (e.g., peppermint, lavender, eucalyptus, citrus)

Taste

Present new tastes on a swab, small sponge, or Toothette®.

- Pure lemon juice
- Sugar
- Salt / Soy sauce
- Suckers
- Vinegar
- Tongue depressors
- Spicy foods



Tips for Sensory Stimulation Kit Use

- Do not allow a child to concentrate on or become distracted by a stimulus for too long.
- Try to assign meaning and function when using the stimulus items. Tell the child why you are using it or playing with it. (e.g., "We are going to see if you like the taste of new things today." "Let's see if we like how this sounds.")
- Use the stimulus items to encourage fine or gross motor movements and/or communication.
- Present noises intermittently. Noises should **not** be continuous. (The brain will drown out continuous sounds.)
- Expose children to text labels on pictures to encourage language skills.



Here are some Super Duper® products that you can include in your sensory stimulation kit. Visit www.superduperinc.com or call 1-800-277-8737.

Sound

Webber® Phone- Ask for item #WF-22

http://www.superduperinc.com/WXYZ_pages/wf22_44.html

Kazoos- Ask for item #OM-107

http://www.superduperinc.com/O_Pages/om107.htm

Whistles- Ask for item #OM-111

http://www.superduperinc.com/O_Pages/om111.htm

Whizzers- Ask for item #OM-110

http://www.superduperinc.com/O_Pages/om110.htm

Touch

Webber® Neon Pressure Brushes - Ask for item #OTS-365

<http://www.superduperinc.com/products/view.aspx?pid=OTS365>

Vision

Webber® Photo Cards Story Starters- Ask for item #WFC-134

http://www.superduperinc.com/WXYZ_Pages/wfc134.htm

Taste

Dentaswabs- Ask for item #BMP-602

http://www.superduperinc.com/B_Pages/bmp602.htm

Toothettes- Ask for item #OM-321

http://www.superduperinc.com/O_Pages/om321.htm

You may order these items by calling our toll free number, 1-800-277-8737 or order on line at www.superduperinc.com .