



HANDS in Autism®
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Individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) frequently exhibit sensory sensitivities. Some individuals may cover their ears at everyday sounds. Others may refuse to touch or eat certain things



because of how they feel. Some individuals with ASD may like to look at objects from odd angles.

These behaviors suggest sensory sensitivity. Some individuals may also show odd links between senses. For example, some individuals will gag when touching certain objects. You may also find that many individuals with ASD seek out sensory stimulation to calm themselves or reduce anxiety. By creating a sensory kit filled with sensory materials, you may enable individuals with Autism

Spectrum Disorder to meet their sensory needs and thus allowing them to feel less anxious and better able to focus on their daily tasks.

TO MAKE:

1. Review the sensory kit materials list and sensory considerations checklist for some ideas for items to include in the kit.
2. Determine which items would be appropriate and safe for the individuals using the kit. Remember that a sensory kit should contain several options, targeting each of the senses.
3. Create a box or bin with those items that are safe and appropriate to the individual.
4. Consider labeling the kit with a sign or picture so the individual can easily access materials as needed.

TO USE:

1. Place the kit in an area that is easily accessible.
2. At pre-scheduled times, allow the individual to have access to the materials.

Note: It is important NOT to allow the child access to the kit when she or he is distressed or engaged in inappropriate behaviors. Doing so will increase the individual's likelihood of continuing those behaviors as a way to continue gaining access to the kit.

Reminder: This is only one example.

This template may need to be individualized to meet the particular needs of a person with ASD!

SENSORY KIT MATERIALS LIST

Choosing Items for Your Sensory Kit

Items in the sensory kit should be presented only with proper adult supervision.

Tactile:

An individual may find comfort in tactile input if she or he explores items through touch or seeks out various textures to feel or mouth. Possible items:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vibrator/Bumble ball | <input type="checkbox"/> Koosh Balls | <input type="checkbox"/> Bristle Blocks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feather Duster | <input type="checkbox"/> Texture Blocks | <input type="checkbox"/> Vibrating Stuffed Animals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fabric Samples | <input type="checkbox"/> Squeeze Balls | <input type="checkbox"/> Thera-Putty/Silly-Putty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pin Image | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-held Fan | <input type="checkbox"/> Play-dough |

Visual:

An individual may find comfort in visual input if she or he explores items closely with his or her eyes, watches visually stimulating items, or shakes items in front of his or her eyes. Possible items:

- | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spinning Tops | <input type="checkbox"/> Video Games (hand held) | <input type="checkbox"/> Light Wands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Theme Books | <input type="checkbox"/> Stacking Items | <input type="checkbox"/> Figurines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trains | <input type="checkbox"/> Hot Wheels | <input type="checkbox"/> Mirror |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expanding Sphere | <input type="checkbox"/> Timers with Gel Center | <input type="checkbox"/> Bounce Balls |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magna Doodle | <input type="checkbox"/> Slinky | |

Olfactory:

An individual may find comfort in olfactory input if she or he explores items through smell, smells items or people, or seeks various smells. Possible items:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scented Bounce Balls | <input type="checkbox"/> Scratch & Sniff Stickers | <input type="checkbox"/> Scented Books |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scented Markers | <input type="checkbox"/> Scented Toys | |

Auditory:

An individual may find comfort in auditory input if she or he explores the world through sound, plays with or is drawn to items that make noise, is easily distracted by noises, or enjoys listening to music/noises. Possible items:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Microphone | <input type="checkbox"/> Musical instrument |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Headphones/CDs | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys that Make Noises | <input type="checkbox"/> Tape Recorder |

Gustatory:

An individual may find comfort in gustatory input if she or he explores items through taste, puts items in his or her mouth, or seeks out specific tastes or flavors (e.g., crunchy, salty, etc.). Check with the family before introducing any gustatory sensory items. Possible items:

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fireball Cinnamon Candy | <input type="checkbox"/> Sour Candy | <input type="checkbox"/> Suckers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saltine Crackers | <input type="checkbox"/> Gummy Candy | |

Proprioceptive:

An individual may find comfort in proprioceptive input if she or he enjoys deep pressure sensations, engages in activities involving pushing or pulling, lifting, tight spaces, jumping, or hugging tightly. Possible items:

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weighted Vest* | <input type="checkbox"/> Body Sock* | <input type="checkbox"/> Play Tunnel* |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|

SENSORY CONSIDERATIONS CHECKLIST

Individuals with autism often process sensory information differently than others in their environment. These sensory processing difficulties can lead to distractibility, anxiety, pain, and frustration. Lending predictability and a sense of control to these sensory issues can also be of benefit. This form will provide information useful to adapting the environment to better accommodate your child's sensory difficulties.

Sample sensory issues are noted below. Please check which items you have observed to be of concern to your child. If a certain item is missing, please include it at the end of that particular section.

Auditory (Sounds)

Loud, unpredictable sounds:

- Fire alarms
- School bell
- Fireworks

Ordinary/daily sounds:

- Toilet
- Vacuum
- Blow dryer
- Baby crying
- Singing or talking

Subtle sounds:

- Fluorescent light bulbs
- Fans
- Vent noises
- Distant plane/train
- White noise
- Doesn't respond to:
- Sound of own name
- Most sounds
- Other _____

Responds to dislikes with:

- Hands over ears
- Yelling, screaming or crying
- Running away
- Other _____

Gustatory (Taste)

- Tastes/eats non-food items

Preference for:

- Carbohydrates
- Salty
- Sour
- Sweet
- Crunchy
- Pureed
- Certain temperature _____
- Other _____

Responds to dislikes with:

- Gagging
- Vomiting
- Yelling
- Other _____

Olfactory (Smells)

- Responds to subtle smells
- Investigates items by smelling
- Bothered by foul smells
- Bothered by everyday scents:
- Food cooking
- Perfume
- Soaps
- Hands/fingers
- Other _____

Proprioceptive (Pressure in Joints)

Seeks activities involving:

- Pushing/pulling
- Lifting
- Tight spaces
- Jumping
- Other _____
- Grinds teeth
- Difficulty sitting up in a chair
- Other _____

Responds with:

- Falling hard
- Hugging
- Breaking toys
- Slamming doors
- Stomping
- Hitting
- Playing rough
- Other _____

Tactile (Touch)

- Preference for textures _____
- Irritated by textures _____
- Dislikes bare feet
- Insists on having bare feet
- Dislikes light touch
- Avoids "messy" play
- Seeks "messy" play
- Irritated by having hair touched
- Dislikes having face washed
- Dislikes being tickled
- Strong tolerance to pain
- Insensitive to touch
- Other _____

Vestibular (Movement)

- Negative reaction to movement
- Enjoys movement:
- Swinging
- Rocking
- Spinning
- Exhibits poor balance
- Enjoys being upside down
- Fearful of not being upright
- Enjoys climbing
- Other _____

Visual (Sight)

- Focus on parts of objects
- Bothered by visual distracters:
- Fans
- Lights
- Mirrors
- Other _____
- Looks at items up close
- Looks at items at angles
- Difficulty focusing/tracking items
- Other _____

Other Notes

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____