

HOW TO HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP SENSORY STRATEGIES THAT WORK

For many students with sensory processing disorder, it is of utmost importance to determine how to help students develop sensory strategies that work to function more efficiently at school. Of course, there are some students who are not able to express their needs and observational skills and data collection are critical. Regardless, all students should be encouraged to express their sensory needs in order to have functional outcomes.

Step 1: Identify the Challenge

Work with the student to identify what the current challenge is during their school day. Perhaps they are having difficulties with personal space boundaries, staying focused during classwork, or self-regulation.

Create a list of challenges that the student faces in school. Ask the student to help prioritize which ones are most difficult and start to tackle that issue first.

Step 2: Discuss Solutions

Discuss solutions with the student. Provide the student with questions to prompt creating sensory solutions if necessary such as:

What are you doing before you have a challenging situation?

Have you noticed anything that makes the challenge easier to deal with?

Have you noticed anything that makes the challenge harder to deal with?

In a perfect situation, how would you deal with overcoming the challenge?

Provide the student with visual supports if necessary to help students develop sensory strategies that work for them.

If a student is unsure of their sensory preferences, be sure to help educate and guide them on activities or environmental changes that may be beneficial. The Sensory Mini Books and charts (<https://www.yourtherapysource.com/product/sensory-mini-books-and-charts/>) offer a child-centered approach to establishing a child's sensory preferences and dislikes. The books can help children to develop their own coping strategies along with the child's parents, therapists, and teachers. This tool is an excellent resource for non-verbal children as well as verbal children.

Their responses can help determine what sensory solutions may be helpful. Keep in mind not only solutions will be sensory based. Some require more behavioral interventions to produce functional outcomes. Most require a combination of the two (sensory + behavioral) since it is very hard to separate the two.

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Step 3: Formulate a Plan

Work with the student to establish how to apply the solutions throughout the school day. What sensory strategies can be utilized before, during and after the challenge that they are trying to overcome?

Try using something like the Sensory Fill In Worksheet that follows to provide a visual to the student to help them improve their educational outcomes.

You can use visual supports or simply write in what strategies will be tried during the day.

Step #4: Put the Plan into Action

Next, put the plan into action. The student can try the different sensory strategies to improve their functional outcomes.

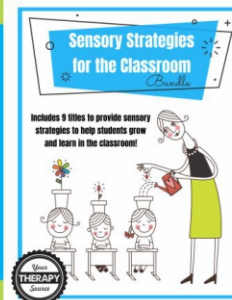
It may be helpful to introduce one or two strategies at a time to determine if they are effective or not.

Step #5: Reflect and Revisit

Sensory needs and strategies are constantly changing. Students may adapt to certain input over time or their sensory needs change. It is important to constantly reflect on what is working and revisit whether other strategies would be more successful or the current strategies need to be tweaked.

Reflection needs to include data collection. Students can use self-generated data collection, or staff can observe outcomes and collect data. Regardless, without some form of data it is difficult to determine what strategies yield the best results. If sensory strategies are used ineffectively, that can hinder educational outcomes.

Sensory Strategies for the Classroom



**Includes
9 resources!**

<https://www.yourtherapysource.com/product/sensory-strategies-classroom-bundle/>

How to Develop Sensory Strategies with Students

Step 1: What is the challenge?

Step 2: What are possible solutions?

Step 3: What is the plan?

Step 4: How and when will you put the plan into action?

Step 5: How and when will you revisit the plan?

When I have to:

I can do these activities:



before

during

after

When I have to:



go to the lunch room

I can do these activities:

before



heavy work
activities

during



listen to
quiet music

after



deep breaths

www.YourTherapySource.com

If you need picture symbols for sensory diets check out:

1. *Cut and Paste Sensory Diet*: www.YourTherapySource.com/sensorydiet
2. *Mini Sensory Books*: www.YourTherapySource.com/minisensory
3. *Sensational Brain Membership*: www.YourTherapySource.com/brainworks
4. *Visual Supports*: www.yourtherapysource.com/product/visual-supports-schedules-self-regulation-classroom-inclusion

If you need more sensory strategies for the classroom check out this bundle:
www.yourtherapysource.com/product/sensory-strategies-classroom-bundle