

# Sensory Strategies for Everyone

Sensory strategies include a variety of tools that help an individual manage the sensory information coming into their brain. When someone becomes overwhelmed by sensory stimuli, it is challenging to remain calm, focused and in the upper brain. Some individuals are more easily triggered by sensory stimuli requiring more frequent access to sensory strategies and tools.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's Trauma Sensitive Schools Online Professional Development Emotional and Physical Regulation Module identifies 6 areas of sensory strategies including vision, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and temperature, and movement or balance. Strategies are chosen for a classroom based on the developmental level of the students. Each individual has a unique profile of sensory strategies that work for them. Teachers need to work to balance all of the various needs in the classroom especially when they collide. Tools are made available but do not need to be used by every student. Routines and procedures are developed around use of the strategies and tools listed below are found in that module.

## Visual

- Looking at nature, such as watching clouds
- Puzzle, mazes, picture books, magazines
- Creating patterns with blocks/dominoes
- Word searches, sudoku puzzles, hidden picture books
- "I spy..."
- Looking at photography
- Journaling, reading
- Drawing on mandalas, doodling
- Sewing, knitting, crocheting, beading

## Hearing/Sound

- Silence, noise cancellation headphones
- White noise machine, humming of a fan or other machine
- Table top water fountain
- Music, singing, whistling
- Nature sounds
- Bubbling fish tank
- Listening to someone read
- Loud environments

## Smelling

- Essential oils, cologne, perfume (e.g., lavender)
- Baked goods
- Mown grass
- Hot cider

## Taste and Chewing

- Mints, hard candy, chocolate, bowl of fruit openly available
- Chewing gum, chewing on a straw, chew sticks
- Sucking on ice, sucker or popsicle
- Sucking through a straw (applesauce, pudding, smoothie)

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## Touch

- Stress balls, clay, bean bags
- Soft or furry fidgets, dry rice, flat marbles
- TheraBand, pedal desk, Under Armour shirt
- Hula hoop to identify personal space

## Temperature

- Blankets
- Lap pads
- Personal fans

## Movement: Elementary

- Animal walks, dancing, balance beams, walking a line
- Stretching, yoga, movement songs—Head Shoulders, Knees and Toes
- Tug of war, TheraBand, therapy balls, rocking chair
- Alternative seating

## Movement: Middle/High

- Running, jogging, hiking, walking
- Stretching, hacky sack, juggling, ping pong
- Origami, mandalas
- Diverse seating—standing desk, adjustable heights
- Sweeping, raking, washing a table, carrying books