



Activity ideas for a Sensory Circuit

Emma Weaver – Director of the Neurodiversity Early Years Service



Our senses play a key role in our interaction with the world around us and how we manage our big feelings. Lots of children with Neurodevelopmental Conditions, they need regular support to manage all of the sensory input from the environment around them. A great way to support a child presenting with sensory integration difficulties is by setting up a sensory circuit either at nursery or in the home. This fact sheet will introduce you to the stages of a sensory circuit and recommended activities that you can have some fun with.

Stage 1: Energy Lifting section

The aim of the alerting activities is to provide vestibular and proprioceptive stimulation. This prepares the brain for learning and the demands of the day.

Activities can include:

- Jogging on the spot.
- Bouncing 10 times on a space hopper.
- Jumping on the spot / jumping jacks.
- Running around a track.
- Bouncing 10 times on a mini trampoline/ trampette.
- Rolling forward and back over a peanut ball.
- Step ups.
- Skipping.
- Hopscotch.

Stage 2 Organising section

This section includes activities that require motor sensory processing, balance and timing. The child needs to organise their body, plan their approach and do more than one thing at a time.

Activities can include:

- Balancing on a beam or a line of tape.
- Log roll – log roll along (body straight and feet together).
- Climbing wall bars.
- Balance with a bean bag on head.
- Rolling over a peanut or gym ball – tummy down on ball walk hands out as far as possible without falling off then back again.
- Peanut / Gym ball activities.
- A series of actions e.g. hopping on one leg x6, clapping x 5, jumping on spot x3.
- Blowing bubbles or blowing a paper ball to a target.

Stage 3: Calming Section

Finishing the circuit with calming activities ensures that as the child leaves the circuit they are feeling calm, centred and as ready for the day as possible.

Activities include:

- Weighted resources.
- Stretching over a peanut ball – front and backwards.
- Hot-dogs - rolling child up tightly in a blanket with head out, child has to wiggle and push their way out of it.
- Resistance band activities.
- Press ups- wall press ups whilst stood up.
- Plank – lie on their forearms and toes forming a plank (once correct position is established increase the challenge by increasing the duration of the hold, raise a leg and hold for a few seconds and repeat with the other leg).
- Calming fidget toys – soft textures.