



Top Tips for Sensory Boxes/Bags

A sensory box/bag is a box or bag filled with things for your child/young person to explore. Sensory boxes can be used in different ways for different purposes. If your child hates going to the shops but it is unavoidable then taking their sensory box could make it easier. Some public places have sensory bags you can borrow during your visit. Some children/young people like to play with the things in their box during the day just for fun.

Here are some top tips for making up a sensory box/bag:

- Start by including activities and items you already know they like or are helpful.
- Use things you already have or household items when possible (you don't need to spend a lot of money to make up a sensory box/bag).
- Use photos, symbols or activity cards for the activities that don't have any items e.g. wall pushes.
- Include 6 or 7 items, don't include too many things as this might make it difficult for them to choose.
- Only include items your child can do at that time. Only include the 'park' when you have time to stop and go to the park, take it out at times when this is not possible.
- Only include items you know are safe if your child/young person likes to put things in their mouth etc.
- Think about when your child/young person will want/need to use their sensory resources to help you decide if a bag or box will be more useful.

Here is a list of ideas – try picking one or 2 from each of the sections:

Proprioception/Body Awareness

- Activities that involve pushing, pulling or hanging, for example wall pushes, push ups, hanging from a climbing frame or pushing a shopping trolley or wheelbarrow
- Activities where the body is squeezed e.g. using a lycra body sock or dance sack, tight cuddles
- Safe items to chew
- Squeezy and stretchy toys
- Weighted items such as a lap blanket, beanbags, weighted toys or backpack etc.
 - Weighted items are examples of sensory-based tools used in someone's environment to support their physical and emotional regulation. There is limited evidence that they help but some people like them. Do not try a weighted item if your child cannot remove it on their own. It is also important to think about:





- if your child/young person has any health conditions that might affect their ability to breathe or regulate their temperature then do not use a weighted item
- if you are concerned that a weighted item will make a skin condition worse do not use it.
- if you are concerned about any medicine or illness affecting levels of alertness do not use a weighted item.
- you should always carefully monitor your child/young person's use of any equipment.



Hearing

- Musical toys such as bells, shakers, rattles, rainmakers etc. or try pots, pans and spoons.
- Bubble wrap for 'rustling' and 'popping'.
- Music boxes.
- Different things to listen to e.g. relaxation music, whale noise, white noise, classical music or any favoured music, audiobooks, podcasts etc. They might listen through headphones or ear buds.



Movement/Vestibular

- Skipping ropes.
- 'Tin-can' stilts; look on line for instructions to make your own.
- Playground equipment; swing, climbing frame,
- Space hopper or trampoline
- Bike, trike, scooter etc.
- Movement and playground games e.g. Simon Says, Twister, Floor is Lava, What's the Time Mr Wolf.



Touch

- Different fabric squares or scarves; silk, velvet, cord, fur fabric etc.
- Different textured fidget toys; hard, soft, rough, smooth etc.
- Squeezy and stretchy toys, look online for ideas to make your own.
- Dish scourers, paint brushes, loofahs, feathers, sheepskin etc.





- Bubble wrap, survival blanket.
- Vibrating/massage toys or cushions.
- Messy play: tubs of 'slime' or playdough, lentils, sand. Can of shaving foam or moisturising mousse etc. don't use anything that will irritate your child/young person's skin

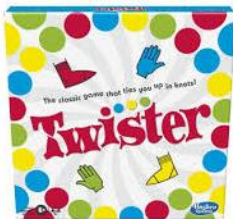
Please be aware that playdough (both shop bought and homemade) may contain wheat. Make sure you use a wheat free alternative if there is a known wheat allergy.

Vision

- Light up toys (particularly if you have a dark room the child can go to).
- Spinning toys such as spinning tops and gyroscopes.
- Strings of beads such as those used to decorate Christmas trees.
- Mirror & torch.
- Liquid motion toys (look on Pinterest for ideas on how to make your own).
- Sand timers.
- Kaleidoscopes (look on Pinterest for ideas on how to make your own).



Here are some examples of visuals that you might want to include. You can take photos or use online images to make your own.



I NEED TO TAKE A BREAK.			
 calming corner	 fidget	 hug a stuffie	 read a book
 deeps breaths	 drink water	 eat a snack	 go for a walk