

AUTISM NEWSLETTER

SENSORY ROOMS

Taken from "The Stable Company"

A sensory room is a therapeutic space with a variety of equipment that provides students with special needs, personalized sensory input. It helps children calm and focus themselves so they can be better prepared for learning and interacting with others.

A sensory room is designed to be a safe space to help with sensory issues. It allows students to learn to regulate their brain's reactions to external stimuli by developing coping strategies.

Equipment in a sensory room is used to stimulate or calm the senses and provide a space for people with social integration disorder, autism and other special educational needs to explore and develop their sensory skills. It is a place to relax, destress and diffuse anxieties.

Lots of children struggle to focus and have sensory or emotional difficulties which prevent them from fully engaging with daily life. Our brains are designed to produce and regulate our body's responses to sensory experiences - things we touch, see, smell, taste and hear as well as the pull of gravity and movement around us - a process called **sensory integration**.

For many, this is second nature, but for those with a developmental disorder like autism, the process can be a cause of stress, anxiety and discomfort. For some, the brain can overreact to sensory stimuli and in others, it may not react enough.

Sensory rooms aim to target all eight senses. Most are familiar with five - sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch - but there is also proprioception, vestibular and interoception.

- **Proprioception** — Our muscles and joints all have tiny sensory receptors that tell us where our body begins and ends in relation to our surroundings.
- **Vestibular** — Our inner ears are filled with small canals that contain fluid, which move when we move our head. They contain receptors that send information about our movement and balance to the brain.
- **Interoception** — Our body's way of knowing what we're feeling inside, from the feeling of hunger, to our hearts beating faster and the sensation of butterflies in our stomach.

Sensory play has been proven to have multiple benefits for those with autism and other developmental challenges, including calming their mood, improved focus, building social skills as well as cognitive and motor skill development.

ASD/DCD Cohort

For the 2021-2022 school year, the ASD/DCD Cohort will be virtual and in a new format. We will meet from 8:00 - 8:30 or from 3:00 - 3:30. Substitutes are hard to find ~ so just pick one of those times and join us as we support each other through networking, sharing stories and asking questions. **Please reply to this email if you would like to receive a Zoom link for the cohort meetings.** I will create a distribution list and send out the link as well as a reminder email a few days before before the meeting. The dates are: Tuesday, December 7th, Tuesday, March 1st, and Tuesday, May 3rd. Thank you for all of your hard work ~ I appreciate each of you! Lynne Petersen

STORY DICE – YOUR HANDY STORY IDEA GENERATOR



Now the classic story ideas generator is available for free in your browser. In this version there are over 50 options for each dice – with more options being added as I get around to drawing them. As well as being a fun diversion for parents and kids, this is also a handy tool for writers looking for inspiration to create their own story ideas. As a creative exercise, it’s a brilliant way of giving your imagination a workout. And because your imagination is where your ideas come from, that’s a great mental muscle to flex. The more practice you put into turning the prompts into stories, the better you will get at storytelling and articulating your own ideas.

WHEN TO USE THIS STORY IDEA GENERATOR

- As a regular creative exercise to develop your storytelling abilities
- As a warm-up creative exercise in a group idea-generation session
- As a game to entertain children and help them develop their imaginations
- As a creative prompt to inspire your writing

<https://davebirss.com/storydice-creative-story-ideas/>

STAR WEBINARS

Virtual - 3PM - 4PM
 December 1, 2021; March 1, 2022; May 3, 2021

These webinars are open to all MN educators who are using or planning to use the STAR curriculum. In these quarterly webinars, we will provide guidance on the steps of implementing STAR as well as share resources and answer individual questions.

<https://metroecsu.myquickreg.com/register/user/register.cfm?eventid=16436>

Upcoming Trainings

Dec. 9 - 10, 2021 - Collaborative & Proactive Solutions - Moving From Power and Control to Collaboration & Problem Solving - Ross Greene Ph.D.

<https://aepconnections.com/>

Halloween Resource

This site includes free Halloween vocabulary, an activity bundle, social stories, videos and songs.

http://www.positivelyautism.com/free/unit_halloween.html?m=1