SENSORY rOOM ESSENTIALS

SENSORY FRIENDLY SCHOOL

Prior to separate sensory spaces, apply universal design. Look for patterns in the school day when students need movement, calming, breathing, mindfulness, or learning moments. Create a predictable class schedule, balance active and stationary activities, & rethink your school's sensory environments.

FACILITATOR

The most important piece in the sensory room is the person facilitating the session!! This person is attentive to the student's sensory & regulation needs while promoting student's self-regulation development. They are well versed in co-regulation as a critical component for well-being and a precursor to self-regulation. They create an environment where student's can feel secure to practice new skills & learn from mistakes.

DESIRED OUTCOME

Identify what you want the sensory space to facilitate. Is it therapeutic, recreational, or a retreat from demands? In addition, consider the needs of the student prior to, during, and following the use of a sensory room. Collect data to monitor the skills that are being taught and adjust programming as appropriate.

EVALUATION

To understand a student's sensory processing patterns as they take in, interpret, & use sensory information requires a comprehensive occupational therapy evaluation. Understanding a student's distinct patterns helps to match strategies & supports.

OPERATIONS

We are all sensory beings with different sensory patterns. Rethink how a room is organized to find the just right challenge... one that does not have too much choice to distract or overwhelm and one that promotes regulation. Be sure someone is assigned to oversee & implement maintenance or oversight of the safety, organization, creativity, & aesthetic layout of the space.

TRAINING

Occupational therapy practitioners have speciality knowledge in sensory functions, sensory environments, sensory demands, & self-regulation. Adults facilitating a sensory room require training to use equipment safely, understand underlying sensory principles, implement student programming, & follow policies & procedures.
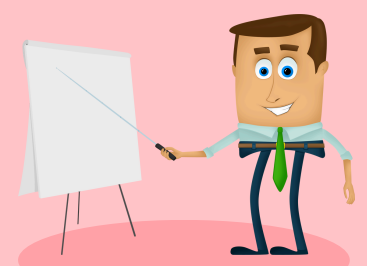
Resources

National Council for Special Education. (2021). Sensory spaces for schools. Retrieved from https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/NCSE-Sensory-Spaces-in-Schools-2021.pdf

Spyhalski, M. C. (2019). Program evaluation of the impact on sensory room activities on student readiness in Muskegon County. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/ot_education/3/

Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child

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