

Sensory Storytime Resource Guide

What is Sensory Storytime?

Designed for children that may need extra sensory support, Sensory Storytime combines traditional storytime components with sensory elements to enhance the experience... all from the comfort of your own home.

We recognize that storytime can be overwhelming and overstimulating for children with sensory processing challenges, and that trips to the library to attend these programs may not fit into their daily routine. Sensory Storytime was created to help alleviate these barriers by providing a way for kids to view content from home and to accommodate their comfort levels and schedules.

What is Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)?

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) is a neurological condition where the brain does not properly receive information from the body's five senses, causing interference in processing and acting appropriately to stimuli both physically and behaviorally.

There are two major types of Sensory Processing Disorder. Hypersensitivity SPD inhibits the ability to filter out sensory information, which can make a person feel overwhelmed and over-stimulated. This can include sensitivity to bright lights or irritation to certain fabrics and clothing. Hyposensitivity SPD causes a person to seek out stimulation, such as through pressure contact or rough play.

Children with SPD will often present with a combination of both types, and while SPD is not a learning disability, it can have a large effect on learning.

Sensory Elements/Tools

By incorporating more of your child's senses into these recorded stories and songs, their learning and enjoyment is more immersive. Here are some ways to improve your child's early literacy development by making your activities engage more of their senses.

Here are some ideas of things to make with everyday household items:

Ribbon wands:

- Tape a few long strips of ribbon to a wooden spoon or stick and enjoy twirling your ribbons during some of our special storytime rhymes.

Scarves:

- Washcloths, dish towels or fabric pieces. Enjoy waving your fabric in the air during special storytime rhymes.

Shakers:

- Cup or bowl, plastic bottle or Tupperware filled with dry beans, rice or popcorn kernels. Tape a lid on top and enjoy!
- Decorate a cardboard toilet paper tube and fill it with dry beans, rice or popcorn kernels. Fold over both ends and staple shut.
- Old set of keys

Musical Instruments:

- Give your child a pot and a wooden spoon and let them explore making different rhythms and sounds.
- Use 2 old CDs to create a set of "cymbals".
- Stretch rubber bands around a bread loaf pan for a DIY guitar.

Enrichment Activities/Crafts

Here are some bonus crafts and activities you can do at home to make your own sensory fun!

Making Goop:

- Use a variety of pantry items (flour, water, oatmeal, sugar, etc.)
- Add some good smells (cinnamon, cocoa powder, pumpkin pie spice)
- Stir it all together and then let the magic happen.
- Add baking soda and then top it off with vinegar
- Watch as your concoction grows and foams.

DIY Fidget Toy:

- Use a funnel to fill a balloon with sand, then securely knot it.

Torn Paper Project:

- Gather some construction paper in a variety of colors
- Have your child tear up the paper into different sized shapes and pieces
- Use the torn scraps and glue to make a collage

Create a Sensory Bin/Bag:

- Fill a plastic tub or paper bag with beans, rice, or cotton balls
- Add small toys or items from around the house
- Have your child feel the different textures and try to identify items with their eyes closed.

Make Homemade Bread Together

- Kneading the bread is the best part and great for tactile processing.

Free play:

- Using mud, play dough or sand helps improve tactile processing.

Online Resources & Learning

Kids in Motion:

Resource page for workshops, online developmental screening, finding therapists. Offices are in Eastern Michigan. <https://kimpediatrics.com/pediatric-therapy-services-mi/sensory-integration/>

Autism Alliance of Michigan:

Provides autism education, access to services across Michigan, and raises awareness about autism. <https://autismallianceofmichigan.org/>

Spiral Foundation:

Toolkit of resources for parents about SPD, activities, and research. Includes videos, factsheets, and guides. <https://thespiralfoundation.org/parent-toolkit/>

Sensory Processing Disorder Parent Support:

Comprehensive list of resources, social stories, directories, and information about SPD, autism, ADHD, and other social cognitive disabilities. <https://sensoryprocessingdisorderparentsupport.com/>

STAR Institute Home Activities:

Guide to incorporating sensory elements and activities at home. <https://sensoryhealth.org/basic/home-activities>