



SAFE PLACE™

SENSE OF SMELL

Smell is directly linked to:

-  The limbic system, which governs emotional memory, behavior and memory storage
-  The cortex, where conscious thought occurs
-  The nervous system

Research suggests smells:

-  Create vital connections that help children obtain optimal learning states
-  Can help individuals:
 - Set higher goals
 - Take on greater challenges
 - Get along better with others
 - Enhance mental alertness (peppermint, basil, lemon, cinnamon, rosemary)
 - Calm nerves & relax (lavender, chamomile, rose)

NOTE: Some smells can be dysregulating for some students with special needs; some smells can also be a trigger for students who have experienced trauma.

Provide:

-  Scratch & sniff stickers
-  Aromatherapy scents
-  Scented lotions:
 - Cranky Cream
 - Boo Boo Cream
 - Concentration Cream
-  Scented play-doh and other art materials



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SENSE OF SIGHT

Visual supports are tools that are used to provide concrete information for children to better understand the world around them, enhance communication and language skills, daily and environmental expectations.

Provide visuals in your Safe Place:

-  **Safe Place Icons:** S.T.A.R., Drain, Balloon, & Pretzel
-  **Choice Boards:** Positive strategies that the children can select to help them relax
-  **How do you Feel Chart:** Visuals to help children become aware of their current emotional state
-  **Safe Place Pass:** A laminated card with Safe Place icons available during circle or group time to allow child to go to Safe Place independently
-  **Composure Lap Pass:** Helpful for children experiencing rage
-  **Friends & Family Board or Book:** Display family pictures

Additional Helpful Visuals:

-  **"Huggee" miss you dolls** (holds a picture of loved ones)
-  **Tornado tube**
-  **Motion wand**
-  **Aquarium** (real or fake)
-  **Kaleidoscope**
-  **Wave bottle**
-  **Sensory bottles**



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SENSE OF SOUND

Music can be a helpful sensory tool to utilize in your Safe Place. Music can calm the brain and support the student as they up-shift through the brain states.

-  Play calming and familiar music (meditative, tribal drumming, and gong)
-  Major keys instead of minor keys
-  Music with strong base (rap) for older children
-  Rap helps some children with attention issues
-  Humming stimulates frontal lobes for impulse control

NOTE: Some students can have certain sensitivities to specific sounds.

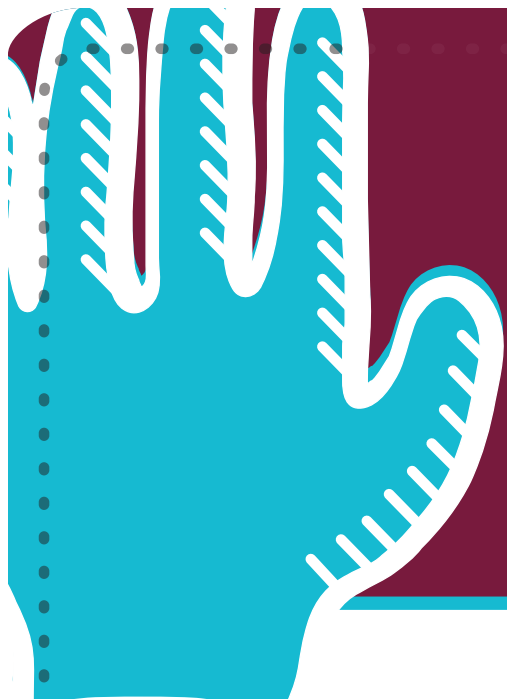
Provide:

-  Headphones for children who might feel over stimulated with loud sounds
-  Recording of parent in child's native language saying, "You're safe. Keep breathing. You can handle this. I love you."
-  Nature sounds
-  Classical music or music without words
-  Stuffed animal with recorded message
-  Voice output devices with recorded message or key phrase so a child can participate in class songs and chants
-  Portable CD player with headphones so that a child can listen to music independently



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SENSE OF TOUCH

Deep touch pressure can be calming and organizing for the sensory system. Many children enjoy deep touch pressure. Other children may not like deep touch pressure that is imposed on them by others, but will seek it out independently.



Are easily distracted



Lacking concentration skills



Hyperactive or stressed



Have immature sensory processing

Provide:



Weighted blankets (homemade or purchased)



Weighted vests



Ankle weights



Blankets for swaddling



Weighted beanbags



Lap table for writing



Opportunities to play “I Love You Rituals” involving touch



Noise reducing headphones



Vibrating objects such as vibrating bug, mats, pillows and “jigglers” oral massagers for calming and organizing the brain



Chewing food stations with foods such as crunchy foods, twizzlers, goldfish, crackers, etc., for children who may bite



Active seating: therapy balls, wobble chairs, air cushions/wedges



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CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Safe Place is designed for all children so that they can work to change their inner state from upset to calm in order to optimize learning. Some adaptations might be helpful to make when children with special needs are accessing the Safe Place.

Offer the following modifications when necessary:

-  **Physical proximity:** stay close by while a child is in the Safe Place
-  **Physical boundaries:** make sure that the area is a clearly defined space
-  **Minimize distractions:** only include necessary visuals to help children regain composure
-  **Task analysis:** break down tasks into smaller, more manageable steps
-  **Social stories:** “What to do in the Safe Place”
-  **First-Then books**
-  **Auditory prompts**
-  **Visuals prompts**
-  **Model behavior**
-  **Verbal prompts**



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