

Sensory-Friendly Classroom Setup

This playbook describes the steps to create a classroom environment that supports students with sensory processing issues. It aims to minimize sensory overload and make the learning space accommodating for all sensory needs.

Step 1: **Assess Needs**

Conduct assessments to identify the sensory needs of the students. This may involve observing students, discussing with parents and therapists, and gathering information on each student's specific sensitivities and preferences.

Step 2: **Create Zones**

Designate different areas in the classroom for various activities, ensuring there are quiet zones for students to take breaks. Each zone should cater to different sensory input needs such as a reading corner, a movement area, or a calming space.

Step 3: **Modify Lighting**

Adjust the classroom lighting by using natural light when possible or installing filters on fluorescent lights to reduce glare and flickering, which can be disruptive for some students.

Step 4: Manage Noise

Implement noise control by using soft furnishings, minimizing background noise, and providing headphones or earmuffs to reduce auditory distractions.

Step 5: Incorporate Textures

Incorporate a variety of tactile experiences by using different types of seating, rugs, and fidget tools to satisfy the tactile needs of students who may need additional sensory input to focus.

Step 6: Visual Supports

Implement visual supports such as clear labels, visual schedules, and organized materials to help students navigate the space and their routines with less stress.

Step 7: Flexible Seating

Offer flexible seating options like balls, cushions, or standing desks to accommodate different students' needs for movement and positioning while learning.

Step 8: Review Policies

Revise classroom rules and procedures to be inclusive and supportive of students with sensory processing issues, ensuring that the policies accommodate the need for breaks or the use of sensory tools.

Step 9: Training and Support

Provide training for teachers and support staff on sensory processing issues and effective strategies to help manage them in a classroom setting.

Step 10: **Regular Updates**

Regularly review and update the sensory accommodations based on feedback from students, observations, and ongoing assessments to ensure they remain effective and supportive.

General Notes

Collaboration

Collaborate with occupational therapists, psychologists, and special education professionals to gain insights into the best practices for creating a sensory-friendly classroom environment.

Parental Involvement

Engage with parents to understand their child's individual sensory needs and to create a consistent approach between home and school environments.

Student Empowerment

Involve students in the decision-making process to empower them and to ensure the accommodations effectively meet their sensory needs.