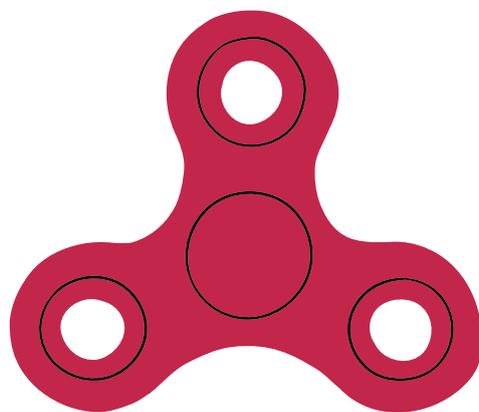


SENSORY TOOLS INFORMATION BOOKLET



SENSORY TOOL BREAKDOWN



Introduction for Teachers

Sensory tools are practical supports that help students regulate their bodies, manage emotions, and stay engaged in learning. They are **not rewards or behaviour management tricks**, but access tools that support participation, focus, and wellbeing (American Psychological Association, 2022; Australian Government, 2025).

Every student experience sensory input differently. What feels calming for one learner may be distracting or overwhelming for another (Champagne et al., 2022). The goal is not to find the perfect tool but to offer flexible options that students can use intentionally and appropriately (Australian Occupational Therapy Association, 2023).

Important Notes for Teachers

- **They are 'tools' not 'toys':** Sensory tools have a functional purpose to support regulation and engagement (Sensory Project, 2025).
- **One tool does not fit all students:** Different students respond to different sensory inputs (APA, 2022).
- **Choice matters:** Allow students to select what works best for them (NSW Department of Education, 2023).
- **Support learning, not reward behaviour:** Sensory tools are interventions to facilitate participation, not incentives (Australian Government, 2025).
- **Normalise use:** Placing sensory items in accessible locations for all students reduces stigma and encourages self-regulation (AIFS, 2023).

CLASSROOM
SENSORY TOOLKIT

AUDITORY (SOUND)

Supports students sensitive to noise or who need sound input to focus.

Tools & Strategies:

- Noise-cancelling or noise-reducing headphones
- Soft background music or white noise
- Calm-down audio (nature sounds, breathing tracks)
- Clear verbal cues paired with visuals



Best for: Noise sensitivity, anxiety, focus, transitions (APA, 2022; ADHD Australia, 2023)

VISUAL

Supports students who need structure, predictability, or visual grounding.

Tools & Strategies:

- Visual schedules
- Calm-down visuals or emotion charts
- Desk dividers
- Low-stimulus wall spaces
- Timers (visual countdowns)



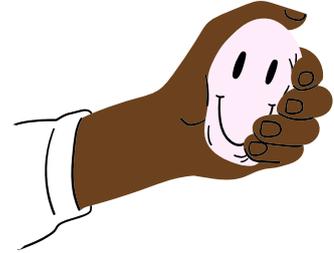
Best for: Predictability, transitions, executive functioning

TACTILE (TOUCH)

Provides grounding through hands-on sensory input.

Tools & Strategies:

- Fidget tools (stress balls, putty, textured rings)
- Fabric swatches or sensory mats
- Velcro strips under desks
- Weighted lap pads



Best for: Regulation, attention, self-soothing (OTARC, 2024; Sensory Project, 2025)

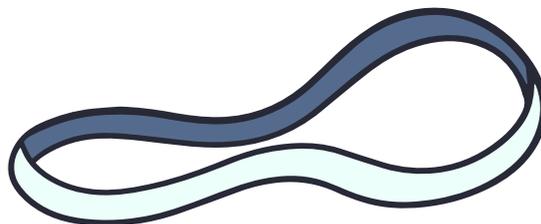
PROPRIOCEPTIVE (BODY AWARENESS)

Deep pressure and resistance input that calms the nervous system.

Tools & Strategies:

- Weighted blankets or vests
- Resistance bands on chair legs
- Wall push-ups
- Carrying books or classroom jobs

Best for: Calmness, emotional regulation, focus



VESTIBULAR (MOVEMENT & BALANCE)

Supports students who need movement to stay regulated.

- Wobble stools or balance cushions
- Rocking chairs
- Movement breaks
- Spinning or stretching activities



Best for: Alertness, attention, sensory seeking

OLFACTORY (SMELL - USE CAUTIOUSLY)

Can be calming but overwhelming for some students.

Tools & Strategies:

- Scented pencils or stickers
- Calm-down scent jars
- Fresh air breaks



Best for: Calming routines, emotional grounding

⚠ Always check sensitivities first

ORAL (MOUTH INPUT)

Supports focus, attention, and self-regulation through safe oral stimulation.

Tools & Strategies:

- Chewable pencil toppers
- Crunchy or chewy snacks
- Water bottles with straws



Best for: Concentration, stress relief, self-regulation (APA, 2022; ADHD Australia, 2023)

CRAFTS & CALMING ACTIVITIES

Offering silent, hands-on activities can further support regulation and wellbeing:

Tools & Strategies

- Mindfulness colouring books
- Puzzles
- Quiet craft projects

Make these items available during lessons and in quiet spaces to allow students to self-regulate (AIFS, 2023; OTARC, 2024).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Sensory tools are flexible, inclusive, and practical supports that enable students to participate fully in learning. Evidence supports embedding these tools within classrooms to:

- Promote self-regulation
- Reduce stress and overwhelm
- Enhance engagement and focus
- Foster inclusive learning environments (APA, 2022; Australian Government, 2025; OTARC, 2024)

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