

Sensory Circuits @ Heathermount

2022



What are Sensory Circuits?



Set up of circuits

Alerting	Alerting activities – to provide proprioceptive and vestibular input in a controlled setting. This prepares the brain for learning
Organising	Organising activities – includes activities that require motor sensory processing. This will also work on motor skills such as balance, coordination, ball skills etc.
Calming	Calming activities – ensure student leaves circuits in a calm and grounded way

Aim of sensory circuits



Participation in sensory circuits are a great way to both energise and settle students into the school day.



The aim is to focus concentration in readiness for the day's learning



The circuit also encourages the development of sensory processing skills (e.g. gross motor skills)

Targets



Physical skills target (e.g. to improve balance or coordination)

Sensory or behavioural target (to be less anxious, to stop shouting out in class, to be able to access lessons)

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1. Alerting activities



Activities that make the head
change position rapidly
(remember vestibular receptors
are in the inner-ear)



These activities helps to wake up
the system



Includes jumping, bouncing,
skipping, step ups

Example of activities

- Which way cards
- Rope jumping



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2. Organising activities



The second set of activities should be those that provide a motor challenge to the student

These are generally activities that challenge postural control, coordination, ball- and balance skills

It generally includes activities that requires all systems to work together

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Example of activities



- Using the outdoor equipment
- Obstacle courses
- Ball activities
- Balance boards
- Yoga/body position cards

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What are we working on?



Regulation – being more alert/waking up the body to be ready to learn and participate



Body awareness – where am I in space. How much force to use in movements



Motor planning skills - Do I know how to move my body in different directions?



Balance skills – can I maintain my balance while jumping/moving?



Bilateral integration – can I use my arms/legs together/two sides of my body together in a coordinated way?



Rhythm and coordination – can I coordinate my body parts together and keep rhythm/follow a sequence of motor steps?



Instruction following – Do I need a demo/verbal input or can I just be shown the cards?

3. Calming input



The third set of activities should be those that calm the students

Breathing, deep pressure, proprioception, heavy work activities

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Example of activities

Deep breathing

Helps prepare students to be calm, focused and regulated.

Decreases anxiety

More and more evident that this is an important life skill to teach to students.




Theraband stretches

Pull ups/weight training etc.

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Foundation

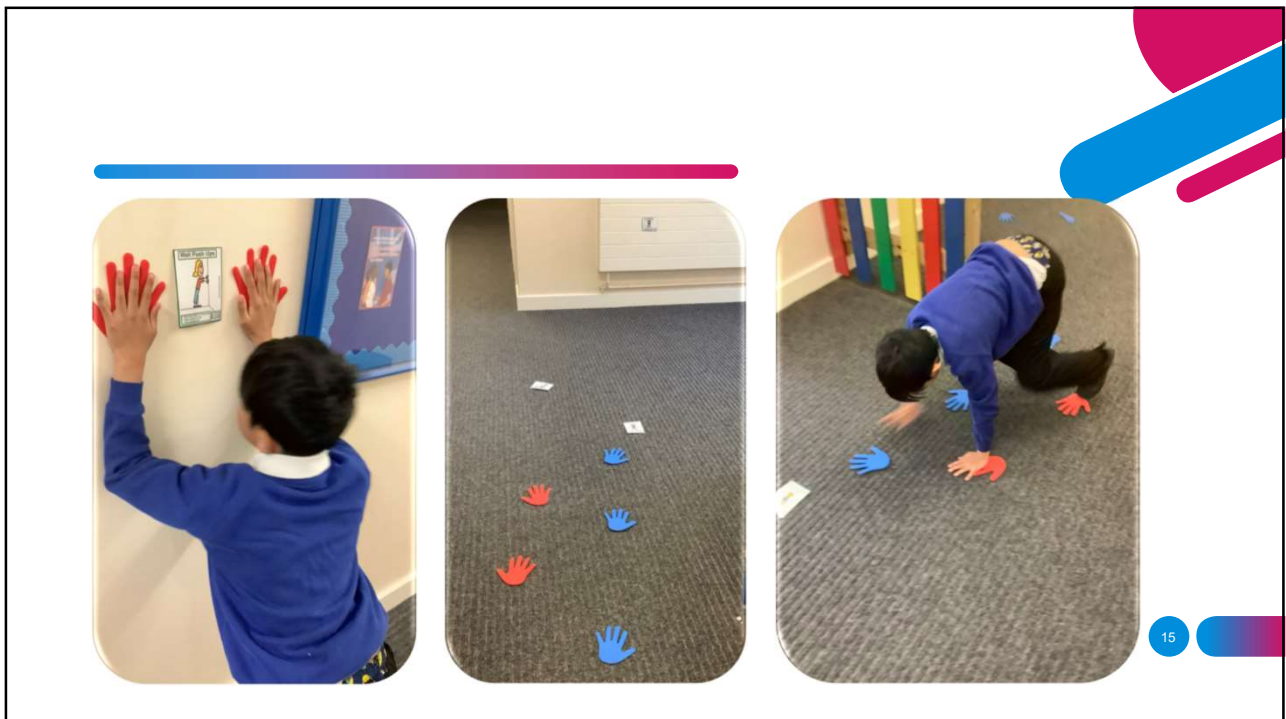


1	2	3
		
Star	Square	heart



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Staff & Student Feedback

When formed as a new group following admissions to the school, Mercury class were very dysregulated and unaware of how their bodies felt.

This obviously had a knock-on affect to lessons, where they constantly disrupted theirs and other classes.

Sensory circuits have enabled the boys to ground themselves first thing in the morning, enabling them to access and learn within lessons.

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Final thoughts



Clear structure – try to limit the chaos. The aim is to get students more regulated.



Use visual supports for students who might require this.



Be mindful that having the radio on/lights too bright might make it too 'busy'

Final (final) thoughts



The brain favours repetition and physical activity plays an important role in development

The consistent structure of the sensory circuits ensures predictable sensory input, whilst building up skills by doing it again and again. This doesn't happen overnight...repetition is really important.

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Alerting activities at home



- Jumping
- Keeping balloon in air
- Running on spot
- Star jumps

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Organising activities for at home

- Obstacle courses
- Yoga poses/posture cards
- Animal walks



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Calming activities at home

- Using straw with cotton ball
- Ping pong ball blowing
- Blowing bubbles with water
- Deep pressure
- Yoga poses
- Deep massages



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