



All Saints Lessingham

SUMMER SENSORY GUIDE



Open Arms Support Services

The summer holidays can be a challenging time for our students and families, be it the changes in routine, travelling to unfamiliar places, dealing with noisy crowds, changes in plans or simply being stuck inside on a rainy day.

We have put together some tips and ideas to help you and your child get the most out of this summer holiday. We are aware that all our students are individuals with very different needs and therefore some sections of the booklet may not be relevant to your child or your family, but we hope that you find something useful which helps you to get Ready, stay Steady and Go and have some fun!

This guide is split into 3 sections:

READY – Tips and visual supports to help with getting ready for the day and **preparing** for outings.

STEADY – Activities and strategies to support emotional regulation and help your child **calm** at home or when out and about.

GO – **Fun** sensory activity ideas and suggestions for places to visit.

Have a great Summer!

Jemma Baker,
Occupational Therapist, Open Arms Support

The ideas and activities included in this guide have been selected to help support your child's sensory needs in the following areas:



Vision
(Visual processing)



Touch
(Tactile processing)



Hearing
(Auditory processing)



Smell
(Olfactory processing)



Oral Motor & Taste
(Gustatory processing)



Balance & Orientation
(Vestibular processing)



Movement & Pressure
(Proprioception)

READY...

All children, especially those with Autism, and those who have difficulty processing sensory information, the more informed they are about plans and what to expect, the easier it will be for them to prepare themselves for upcoming experiences.

A little careful preparation can therefore make a big difference. Below is a collection of visual aids and tips to help you and your child prepare and plan your days.

1.1 General preparation tips for the summer holidays

- **Maintain routines:** While at school, a child wakes up at a reliable time, goes to school (where they follow a schedule of daily activities), eats lunch at a set time, travels at the same time of day and eats dinner at similar times. These routines fill much of your child's time. Though your child may not be in school, maintaining a similar daily routine will ease the transition into summer and be especially important when it is time to go back to school. Even adults may find it difficult to adjust from having a busy, filled schedule, to having an excess of free time. Routines such as chores, outside time, and bedtime can be kept throughout summer while still allowing for your child to enjoy their break from school. There are also plenty of activities to schedule throughout the summer to keep your child engaged and from becoming sedentary. See the green 'GO' section below.
- **Work together to create a calendar:** Start by filling with the known activities - holidays, visits to and from family, appointments etc and ask your child for input. For example, he or she may want to spend time learning more about a hobby or interest, visit somewhere special or may simply prefer to do required chores in the afternoon rather than the morning. See the purple 'Appendices' section below for some templates that you might find helpful or you may prefer to use your own. Calendar events can be visual pictures, words or both, depending on age and what your child processes better.
- **Schedule in downtime too:** Once you have noted all the major events of the summer you can fill in the other days as and when - it does not have to be anything more than "a walk", "making cookies", "pyjama day", "ride your bike" or even "play your own games" day.
- **Anticipate Disruptions:** No matter how hard you try, your child's schedule may get disrupted. Maybe a traffic jam prevents you from arriving at the destination on time or a friend gets sick before a playdate. Talk with your child as soon as possible about the change and be prepared with an alternative. For example, you can say, "I'm sorry that we can't make it to the museum today. Let's take a virtual tour instead." Because you know your child best, use the language and strategies that work for him or her when schedule changes occur.



- **Discuss what to expect** and include details such as:



- What will the destination/airport/station look like?
- Will there be a lot of people?
- What sounds will there be?
- How long?
- Where will your child sit and who will be seated beside them?
- What are the rules and expectations?

- **Involve your child in packing their bag.** You could make a list together for them to check off (with pictures/photos if needed). Things to consider including are:



- a DIY calming kit (see Steady section)
- a weighted object such as their favourite book (for calming, regulating proprioceptive input)
- snacks
- visual schedules (if used)
- comfort toy(s)
- fun travel games such as Eye Spy Sheets/bottle (see below)
- a tablet loaded with games and pre-downloaded films/episodes (BBC iPlayer kids allow several episodes to be downloaded)
- colouring book and crayons or water-pen pad (such as Galt or Aqua Doodle)
- leaflet/brochure/map for the place(s) you are visiting
- Something they might look forward to using on arrival (such as some kids binoculars if visiting a zoo or dinosaur park, a pinwheel or sand mould if bound for the beach etc).

- **Write a short story**, to help you discuss any bigger upcoming trips, such as a family holiday or visit to somewhere new. Insert the people involved as the characters and including details above. Your child(ren) could help with illustrations or add stickers to make it more special. Read the story every night before bedtime to help your child prepare for the big day. You could even take the book with you and follow along with the storyline as you progress through the trip.



- **Hold a dress rehearsal for bigger trips.** Try setting up a pretend airport/station and practice security checks and the flight. Or review videos of the amusement park, ballpark or aquarium before your adventure. This dress rehearsal may help better prepare your child for the trip, reduce anxiety and boost his or her confidence.

1.2 Time to get ready

Mornings can be a massive source of stress for any family, especially when trying to get organised for a day out. This can be worse if your child has some tactile sensitivities or difficulty with personal care tasks.

Some children (particularly those who use visual schedules), may benefit from (and enjoy) having a visual routine chart which they can check off task by task. An example is included within the appendix (or there are many free printables available on the internet). Simply print, laminate (if you can, a few strips of clear parcel tape would also work), hang somewhere that makes sense. Your child can use a dry erase marker to check off each task. They don't have to go in the exact order, which is why they are no numbers on this chart. Instead, it's more like a checklist. Then simply wipe it clean at bedtime ready for the next day.

The following hints may also help your mornings to run a little smoother...

Clothing



- **Marks and Spencer** offer a 'Kids Easy Dressing Range' of school uniform and regular clothing items designed for children with sensory issues or who need a little help with dressing. Their range includes items without zips or buttons such as pull up trousers and hidden rip tape shirts
<https://www.marksandspencer.com/l/kids/easy-dressing>
- **Sensory Smart** clothing sells a range of seamless underwear and socks as well as other seamless, super-soft and label free clothing, including school uniform (www.sensorysmart.co.uk)
- **Spectra Sensory Clothing** sells a range of reversible clothing including school uniform (www.spectrasensoryclothing.co.uk)
- **Kozie Clothes** from the USA. Sells a range of compression clothing as well as some temperature control items. (www.etsy.com/uk/shop/KozieClothes)
- The **Special Kids Company** sells a range of seamless socks as well as super soft polo shirt bodysuit for school. They also have a range on swimwear that offers additional support for those with continence issues. (<https://specialkids.company>)



Shoes



- If shoe shopping is too difficult for your child, **Clarks** offer a 'measure at home guide' for use with one of their gauges. (www.clarks.co.uk/measureandfit-at-home)
 - **Startrite** also have a 'measure at home guide'. Be mindful that their sizing differs to **Clarks**. (<https://www.startriteshoes.com/measure-at-home>).
 - **Sainsbury's** sell a range of shoes with a 'Toe Zone' measure on the sole for an easy visual check to see if it fits. (<https://tuclouthing.sainsburys.co.uk/c/shoes/toezone-shoes>)
-
- **Vivo barefoot** shoes have ultra thin, puncture resistant soles that offer a 'barefoot' feel. (<https://www.vivobarefoot.com/uk/kids>)
 - **Laces** - You may feel that the holidays are a good time to help teach your child new skills such as tying their laces. Please see the handout in the appendix with links to some videos on some alternative methods to make it a little easier.

You might want to look at alternatives to shoe laces including elastic laces and no-tie laces such as **Hickies**, **Lock laces** or **Zubits**.



Sun Cream

Applying sun cream may be a difficult task for those who are sensitive to tactile input. The following are some suggestions that may make this task a little easier:



- **Try Scent free sun cream** – Such as www.sainsburys.co.uk/shop/gb/groceries/suncare/sainsburys-sun-protect-lotion-5-star-uva-protection-spf-50-200ml, www.childsfarm.com/products/childs-farm-50-spf-sun-lotion-cream-unfragranced/ www.greenpeople.co.uk/
- **Spray-on sun cream** – may still need rubbing in but it doesn't have the same consistency as many regular sun lotions so application may be easier.
- **Use firmer pressure** - Your child may prefer you to use firm massage-like strokes to apply sun cream rather than the tickly light touch of spray-on sun lotion.
- **One application a day sun cream** – Be mindful that this will need reapplying after going in the water.

- **Let the child rub cream in** – If they rub it in themselves they can take their time, and do it as gently or as firmly as they want – they don't have that physical contact with another person which can be uncomfortable, or even painful.



- **Apply at home** - Put sun cream on your child before going to the beach or forest. This will let it dry on the skin so it attracts less sand, dirt or bugs. Plus it may be easier to tolerate at home where there's not so much conflicting sensory input.

- **Create a routine around applying sun cream** – this might be something simple like putting sun cream on at a certain time in the morning before the sun is at its strongest.



- **Sun protection suits** – these can cover most of the body and can offer similar protection to sun cream if offers UVA protection

- **Hats** – With flaps or a wide peak to provide cover for the neck, face, and ears.

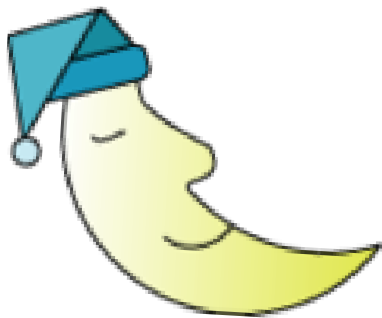
- **Going out/Playing out** – if a child wants to play out, but not put on sun cream then you may need to restrict the time they can go out to the early morning or the late evening rather than when the sun is at its hottest.

- **Use an applicator** - Try some different applicators such as sun cream sticks, blocks and roll-ons. The following is a fillable roller-ball and sponge applicator that may be useful if your child dislikes being touched (www.solarbuddies.co.uk/)



Top Tip:
Try using a makeup sponge to apply suncream to your child's face

1.3 The next day starts with a good night's sleep.



Sleep helps us to process information and prepare for the next day's events and challenges, however some children with increased sensory needs, find it difficult to wind down and get to sleep.

If your child struggles with bedtimes and sleep, below are some tips that *may* help prepare for a good night's sleep.

Tip 1: Structure

Some children may benefit from a bedtime checklist. This may or may not need to be followed in order, depending on the child. Simply having the visual prompts for them to complete bedtime tasks and the visual countdown to sleep time (the number of tasks reducing) can help. See the purple 'Appendices' section for a printable bedtime checklist.

Using the general preparation tips above in section 1.1 may also help to reduce anxieties about the next day in order to help your child settle down for the night.

Tip 2: No light or red light

When we are subjected to light, our body's ability to produce melatonin (the sleep hormone) reduces, which makes us more likely to wake up (fully or partially).

If you haven't already, try covering or removing anything that emits light (including standby lights, gro-clocks that give off an awakening blue light, etc). Also consider installing a (child-safe) black-out blind and heavy curtains (which are considerably larger than the window opening) to block out early morning sunlight.



If, however, your child is afraid of the dark or prefers to sleep with a light on, try using a red light. Red light wavelengths are very low (much lower than sunlight) and do not interrupt the production of melatonin like other light does. In fact, one could be bathed in red light, with no detrimental effect on sleep.

Tip 3: Background noise

Some children struggle with the process of laying still, reducing their thinking and expecting sleep to come. This can be when they get legitimately scared from their thoughts or any sounds that they hear.

Guided meditative stories for bedtime can be helpful in this situation and there are many child-friendly ones available on phone apps, YouTube, podcasts. The goal is for the story to be something that helps stop your child from thinking about any worries while they lay down trying to go to sleep.

'White noise' such as a fan, relaxation music/sounds can also help at bedtime and throughout the night to reduce night wakings. If your child is more sensitive to auditory input, this may not be for them or you may need to consider the choice and level of white noise carefully.

Tip 4: Get active!

Although many children thrive with a quiet, consistent and low-stimulation bedtime routine, some children struggle with this! If your child is in the latter group, they may need a more active routine that provides more sensory input to help regulate and calm their central nervous system. You may therefore wish to try starting the bedtime routine with 10-15 minutes of fun, interactive play.



This could be a game of hide and seek (inc squeezing into tight spaces!), sensory play, Lego, things involving pushing/pulling or 'heavy work' (great for proprioceptive input), having a cuddly cuddle-a-thon (seeing how many cuddly toys they can gather and squeeze in a certain time or all at once!)... or even some rough and tumble or a pillow fight! You will know what would suit your child best!

Tip 5: Deep Pressure

The proprioceptive sensory input provided by deep pressure can help children's bodies calm, ready for sleep.



It could be built into the bedtime routine (in the form of bear hugs, squishes etc) before or after storytime (or both) or there may be ways to increase the deep pressure your child receives while getting to sleep/sleeping, such as a heavier duvet/quilt, weighted blanket, being tucked in tight etc. Even having lots of cuddly toys on the bed can provide a little extra input!



Tip 6: Screens Off and Power Down

We do appreciate this is not as easy as it sounds for some of our children who find technology so appealing, however electronic screens are a bad idea before bed because their light stimulates the brain. This can make children feel wired just when they should be resting, and it can also inhibit the production of melatonin and serotonin, the sleepy-time hormones. Ideally, children should turn off screens at least one to two hours before bed.



Personal wearable devices that track sleep (like a FitBit) can sometimes work as an effective screening tool for sleep issues. But they're not diagnostic. If your child's wearable device indicates they're not getting quality sleep, it's definitely worth seeing a sleep specialist to figure out why.

STEADY.....

2.1 Self Care for Parents

It can be hard as a parent of a child with additional needs to take time for yourself when your sole focus is on keeping your child calm and happy and meeting their day-to-day needs. Parents with children on the autism spectrum usually experience greater stress than do parents of children with other disabilities. It is just as important to prioritise your needs every once in a while. Sometimes, putting yourself first can be beneficial to both you and your child because, if you don't recharge, you won't have the energy to care for your child in the way they deserve.

To reduce stress, parents need to balance their needs along with those of their child, developing a lifestyle that balances caring with family, hobbies, socialising and work. We know this is easier said than done! Perhaps try some of the following recommendations or see the website links for further advice and support:

Get everyone to make a list of the things that they enjoy.

Try to make sure that everyone gets to do something from their list every day or every couple of days.

The lists should have a mix of activities that vary in cost and time.

Put the lists somewhere everyone can see it to remind you to make fun a part of your daily life.

During this time, self-care for parents might look like...



See the following NHS website for links to useful sources of support for parents and carers: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/autism/support/>

The National Autistic Society run a Parent to Parent telephone service, a UK-wide confidential telephone service providing emotional support to parents and carers of autistic children and adults. The service is provided by trained parent volunteers who offer telephone support from their own homes. Call 0808 800 4106 or visit: <https://www.autism.org.uk/P2P>

See the following website for support groups and activities in the Norfolk area:

Sibs, a website dedicated to supporting brothers and sisters of disabled children and adults: <https://www.sibs.org.uk/>

2.2 Strategies to Support Regulation

Some children can find it difficult to calm down and regulate themselves when experiencing intense emotions such as anger, upset and even sometimes joy. They may therefore need extra support to do this.

As adults, we may use calming and relaxing strategies such as breathing, mindfulness or tensing and relaxing routines to recover from these emotions. These strategies can be quite abstract to children but equally useful.

The items and ideas listed in this section can support children to calm down by helping them to engage in calming and relaxing activities. They can be used throughout the day at times of difficulty and should be introduced calmly when the young person looks like they may be getting upset or becoming stressed. Where possible, support your child to choose an item from their kit (or choose for them if they are finding this difficult) and support them to engage with the items until they can begin to relax. Note: Care should be taken to supervise and ensure any sensory items remain intact and safely sealed, to prevent contents from being swallowed.

2.3 Make a calm down bottle



You will need:

- A plastic water bottle or baby oil bottle (smooth ones are best with no ridges)
- Glitter Glue
- Pouring glitter, sequins or beads to decorate
- Food colouring
- Warm water
- Duct tape

Method

1. Half fill your bottle with warm water
2. Add your glitter glue
3. Add a few drops of food colouring
4. Pour in glitter or sequins
5. Top up with water leave a little room at the top
6. Give it a big shake until it all comes together
7. Top the water to the top
8. Put on the lid, wrap some duct tape around it to prevent it opening or spilling

2.4 Make a sensory bag

You will need:

- Sealable sandwich or freezer bags
- Hair gel
- Glitter
- Food colouring
- Duct tape

Method

1. Scoop or squeeze the hair gel into the sandwich bag
2. Add a few drops of chosen food colour
3. Add some glitter
4. Lay the bag flat and gently flatten so that the air can come out
5. Seal the bag
6. Mix all the ingredients by squishing the bag
7. Stick duct tape across the top of the bag so it is sealed
8. Enjoy squishing your sensory bag



2.5 Make an I-Spy Bottle or Bag

You will need:

- Plastic bottle with wide neck or vinyl pencil case
- Rice
- Small items such as toys, beads, fridge magnets, marbles, buttons etc.
- Card or paper
- Camera and printer
- Strong duct tape or Super glue

Method

1. Lay all 'filler' items out on a table, take a photo and print. (Laminate if possible)
2. Put items into the bottle/pencil case
3. Fill with rice (Tip: a funnel made out of paper can be useful if making a bottle)
4. Seal up the bottle or pencil case, using duct tape or superglue over the lid or zip to prevent it from being opened.
5. Shake to mix up contents
6. Secure printed photo to back of bottle/case.
7. Encourage your child to find the items in the photo
8. If you're feeling extra crafty, these can also be made with fabric and vinyl.



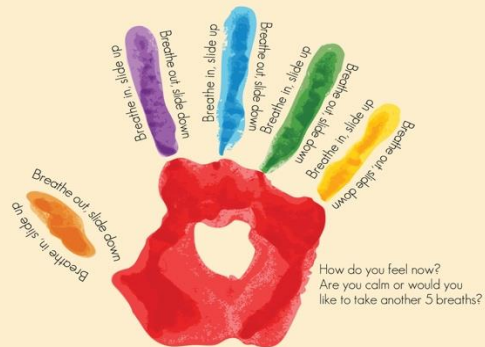
2.6 Try some relaxing breathing exercises

Deep breathing relieves stress and anxiety due to its physiological effect on the nervous system, triggering the release of hormones and a relaxation response in the body. These prompt cards can be helpful for both children and adults to guide and focus breathing during more challenging times.

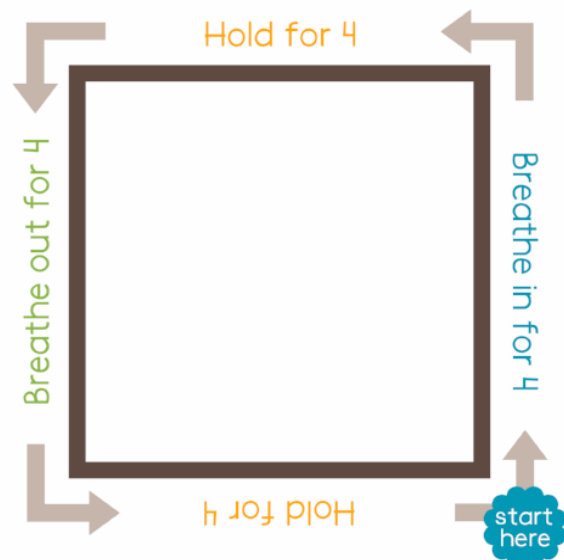
Tip: These could be printed onto card or laminated and added to yours or your child's bag.

CALM DOWN WITH TAKE 5 BREATHING

1. Stretch your hand out like a star.
2. Get your pointer finger ready to trace your fingers up and down.
3. Slide up each finger slowly ~ slide down the other side.
4. Breathe in through your nose ~ out through your mouth.
5. Put it together and breathe in as you slide up and breathe out as you slide down. Keep going until you have finished tracing your hand.



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BREATHING USING YOUR IMAGINATION



BALLOON BREATHE

Pretend your belly is a balloon. Breathe in and make the balloon inflate, then breathe out and make the balloon shrink.

HOT CHOCOLATE BREATHE

Breathe in slowly through your nose, pretending to smell a hot chocolate, then breathe out gently and slowly to cool it.



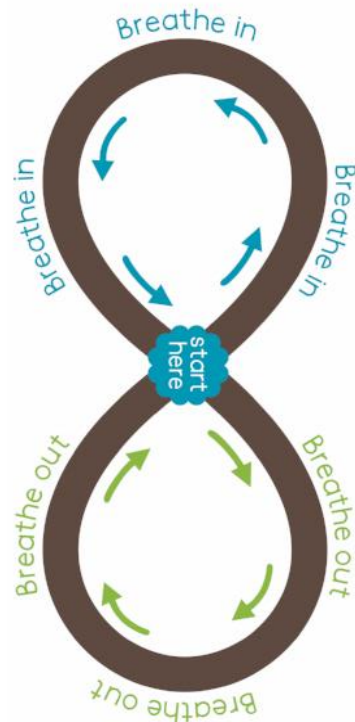
SNAKE BREATHE

Breathe in, pause briefly, then breathe out slowly while you make a hissing sound as long as you can.



BUMBLEBEE BREATHE

Breathe in and pretend you are smelling a flower. As you breathe out, make a humming bee sound.



2.7 Queue-friendly waiting games

<p style="text-align: center;">Balance</p> <p>How long can child balance on each foot like a flamingo? How long can they stand on a line or spot on the floor without stepping off? Try pretending the floor around them is water or lava.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Invisible chair</p> <p>If near a wall, ask child if they can pretend to sit on an invisible chair, using the wall as the backrest (you may need to demonstrate) How long can they manage?!</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Push the wall</p> <p>“That wall looks like it’s in the wrong place... are you strong enough to move it a little?”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">I spy</p> <p>Keep an i-spy sheet (see appendix) or i-spy bottle handy. Or alternatively, try the traditional or colour version of the game.... I.e. “I spy something that is blue”.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Alphabet game</p> <p>Choose a letter of the alphabet and work together to name as many things/names/foods that start with that letter as you can. Or you could try just naming one per letter of the alphabet.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Guess the picture</p> <p>Use your finger to draw a shape/letter/number on your child’s back and see if they can guess what it is.</p>

2.8 Make your own calm down kit

WHAT TO PUT IN A CALM DOWN BOX
www.andnextcomesL.com

<p>Items that provide proprioceptive support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weighted lap cushion or weighted stuffed animal • Weighted vest or pressure vest • Stretchy resistance bands • Sensory tunnel • Mini massager • Body sock • Small blanket 	<p>Items for auditory sensory support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise cancelling headphones • MP3 player with music • Audiobooks
<p>Items to squeeze & keep hands busy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fidgets like Tangle Jr. or puffer ball • Rubik's Cube • Play dough or silly putty • Pipe cleaners • Stress balls • Bubble wrap • Bag of tissue paper to rip • Scarves or fabric scraps • Spinning top 	<p>Items for oral motor sensory support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chew toy or chew necklace • Chewing gum, hard candies, or lollipops • Snacks with a variety of textures • Whistle, harmonica, party blowers, or similar • Rescue Remedy Spray
<p>Items to support breathing & relaxation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottle of bubbles • Pinwheels • Straws and cotton balls or pom poms 	<p>Items that give kids a brain break</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puzzle • Books to read • Blank notebook and writing utensils • Coloring books • Scratch art doodle pad • Small chalk board, Magna-Doodle, Etch-a-Sketch, or Boogie Board • Activity books • Photo album
<p>Items for olfactory sensory support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calming essential oil spray • Smelling bottles • Scratch and sniff stickers 	<p>Items to visually calm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual calm down cards • Sensory bottle or calm down jar • Light up toys • Flashlight • Plastic snow globe • Kaleidoscope • Hourglass • Eye mask
<p>Items to get kids moving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book of yoga poses or yoga activity cards • Skipping rope 	

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GO!

3.1 Fun outdoor sensory activities

Smell (Olfactory)

- Pick herbs or flowers
- Make soup / potions or 'perfume'
- Dry some lavender and make a lavender bag



Touch (Tactile)

- Messy Play – try making cloud dough, oobleck, home-made playdough, soap foam
- Water Play – foil rivers
- Tree rubbing art
- Make a mud kitchen



Taste (Gustatory)

- Make your own ice lollies
- Make your own fruit smoothies
- Crunchy snacks and thick shakes can give proprioceptive input



Body Awareness (Proprioception)

- Any activity involving: pushing, pulling, carrying, crawling, jumping, rolling, stamping, hopping, running, kicking etc.

Hearing (Auditory)

- Make your own woodland windchime
- Go for a listening walk – write down all the things you can hear

See the
Outdoor
Sensory
Motor
Scavenger
Hunt

Seeing (Visual)

- Bubble pop-try popping with finger, toe, knee, foot, elbow etc!
- Hide items amongst a colourful or sparkly messy play tray

Movement (Vestibular)

- Washing line tennis
- Hopscotch
- Draw your own sensory path / obstacle course (chalk)
- Trampoline
- Swing



3.2 Fun indoor sensory activities



Sensory play includes any activity that stimulates your child's senses: touch, smell, taste, movement, balance, sight and hearing. Providing opportunities for children to actively use their senses is crucial to brain development and supports cognitive growth, language development, gross motor skills, social interaction and problem solving skills.

Sensory Trays (Sometimes called sensory bins)

Sensory trays are a great way to provide children with opportunities for sensory exploration, learning and allowing them to have fun. They can also often have a very calming effect and can help to meet sensory needs.

What do you need?

- A container – you can use pretty much any kind of container to make a sensory bin e.g. mini blow up paddling pool, large storage tub, clean cat litter tray, mixing bowl
- Sensory Tray Filler – see list below
- Tools – adding tools to your sensory tray can help facilitate play and develop fine motor skills e.g. tongs, spoons, cups for pouring, spray bottles
- Toys / characters (optional) – adding small toys or items to play or bury in the sensory filler can help to develop imaginative play



Sensory Tray Fillers

- | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| • Sand | • Ice cubes / frozen toys | • Natural items e.g. grass, shells, pebbles, flowers | • Magnetic letters / numbers |
| • Water | • Shaving Foam | • Mud | • Chickpeas |
| • Shredded Paper | • Dyed Oats | • Cotton Wool | • Buckwheat / Polenta |
| • Cloud Dough | • Shredded Coconut | • Buttons | • Dried Pasta |
| • Dyed Rice | • Cornflour gloop / Ooblek | • Playdough | • Cooked spaghetti |
| • Kinetic Sand | • Coins | • Corn | • Cotton Wool |
| • Aquabeads / Orbits | • Slime | • Pompoms | • Soapy Water / soap suds |
| • Epsom salts | • Different Fabrics | • Snow (real or fake) | • Bath fizzers and water |



Try asking:

What can you see? - How does it feel?
 What colours can you see? - Describe how it looks - Count what you can see -
 Look for specific items - Bury items / bury your hands - Pour it over your hands -
 Write your name in the tray



If the weather takes a turn for the worst or your child finds it difficult to access the community, there are lots of activities that you can do indoors. The following list of suggestions may help your child burn off some excess energy.

Simon says

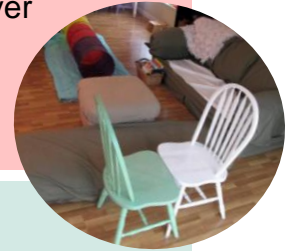
Try one or two stage commands e.g. touch your head and pat your knee.

The floor is Lava!!

Move around the room without touching the floor

Obstacle Course

Sofa cushions, pool noodles – anything you can balance on / climb over or under.



Balloon Tennis

Use spoons or spatulas or even make your own paddles out of paper plates



Animal Walks

Stomp like an elephant, hop like a frog, waddle like a penguin – move like any animal you can think of

Dance Party

Throw a 5 minute dance party and see who can create the best moves

Action Songs

From nursery rhymes to the macarena, there is a song for everyone

Indoor Scavenger Hunt

Find something of a particular colour, something you use, something that feels soft or rough, made of metal etc.

Spy Mission

Walk as quietly as you can and see if you can sneak past someone without them seeing you.

Create your own crash mat!

Fill a duvet cover with pillows, cushions, blankets and soft toys. Button it up and away you



Gym ball exercises

Gym balls can be a cheap and versatile piece of equipment for exercise at home. Bouncing and rolling on them can provide both vestibular (movement) and proprioceptive feedback (body awareness) as well as help to strengthen core muscles. Gym ball squashes can also be calming - Have your child lie on the stomach and slowly but firmly roll the ball up and down their back (avoiding the head).

3.3 Places to go

There's a lot of time to fill during the summer holidays, so here's a few suggestions:



Trampolining is great for providing plenty of vestibular and proprioceptive input and many trampoline parks (including Gravity and High Altitude) have a 'reduced lights and music' session for bouncers with special needs and their families / friends.

A walk in the great outdoors is good for the soul and motor skills. Encourage your child to listen, look, feel, smell, stomp, jump and they'll also be getting plenty of sensory too.



gross
run,
input



Playgrounds are often an essential free form of entertainment for most families during the summer holidays. Try increasing the fun by taking bubbles (can your child swing or slide fast enough to blow the bubbles?), items to hunt for and collect against time, playing red light green light, setting a challenge to complete the obstacle course holding hands with their sibling or carrying a weighted item (for extra proprioceptive input/hard work) etc.

Go see a film at Vue, Cineworld and Odeon, who offer regular Autism-friendly screenings. See websites for details.



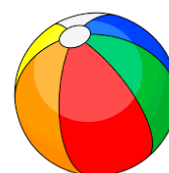
Go to Forest School. There are several who offer family or holiday club sessions throughout the summer holidays. Norfolk-based Forest Schools include Roots and Wings Forest School, Out There, Into The Wild, Growild, Taverham Hall, Wheatfen and many more.

Swimming Pool chlorine can smell like you are inhaling pure bleach for a child with sensory issues. Try noseplugs, an outdoor pool, or a pool that uses something other than chlorine.



Many **Theme Parks, Museums and attractions** (including Legoland, Alton towers, Pleasurewood Hills, Eureka! Etc) offer fast passes for visitors with special needs for whom long queues are not an option.

The **Big Norfolk Holiday Fun** programme provides holiday activities for children and young people aged 5-16 (or 4 if your child is slightly younger but in school) in Norfolk. The summer programme will take place between 25th July – 5th September 2022. Children eligible for means-tested free school meals can claim free spaces on the activities, whilst paid spots are available on many activities for those who don't.



<https://www.activenorfolk.org/public/bignorfolkholidayfun/>

Other helpful info....

4.1 Useful Websites

The following is a list of useful websites that offer support and advice around development of skills, supporting sensory needs, Autism and SEN needs. They often send out regular seasonal activity ideas (although based around American school system) and access to free printables if you sign up to their mailing lists.

- www.lemonlimeadventures.com/ - articles for parents of children with ASC as well as resources and ideas for sensory processing difficulties
- www.pinkoatmeal.com - physical activity and motor skills resources
- www.theinspiredtreehouse.com/ - full of activity ideas to support fine and gross motor development as well as sensory exploration.
- www.thechaosandtheclutter.com/sensory-play- Full of ideas for sensory play
- www.learningforapurpose.com/ - A range of articles and resources for parents and children with ASC.
- www.andnextcomesl.com/ - Blogs, articles and advice on hyperlexia and Autism
- www.growinghandsonkids.com/ - Written by an OT - includes tips, tools and strategies to support sensory needs and the development of functional skills
- www.thesensoryspectrum.com/ - Great website for all things sensory

4.2 Useful Shops

Sensory equipment such as weighted items, ear defenders and chewies are available from the following websites:

- www.sensorydirect.com
- www.rompa.com/
- www.sensoryplus.co.uk
- www.southpaw.co.uk

For cheaper alternatives, you can find a lot of fidgets and sensory toys in the following shops:

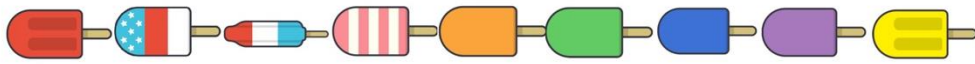
- **Tiger** - useful for all sorts - slime, fidgets, toys. Also sells head massagers and a vibrating massager. Depending on stock, they also have body massagers, gloopy timers / glitter tubes and fibre optic lights.
- **Poundland** - often have slime, squashy toys as well as small characters or tools that can be used in sensory trays
- **The Works** - great for fidgets as well as art and craft resources
- **B&M** – Good for tangle fidgets, slime, art and crafts, outdoor toys as well as battery operated or plug in fairy lights
- **The Entertainer Toy Shop / Langleys / Smyths** – sell a range of pocket money toys as well as other toys.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1:** Example of an i-spy sheet (From www.andnextcomesL.com – more available on website)
- Appendix 2:** Weekly Calender
- Appendix 3:** Daily planner & Useful symbols
- Appendix 4:** Morning routine chart
- Appendix 5:** Bedtime routine chart
- Appendix 6:** Shoelace tying
- Appendix 7:** Outdoor Sensory Motor Scavenger Hunts

I SPY: POPSICLES

Write down the number of each item that you found.



Red Popsicle

Patriotic Popsicle

Skinny Popsicle

Striped Popsicle

Orange Popsicle

Green Popsicle

Blue Popsicle








Purple Popsicle

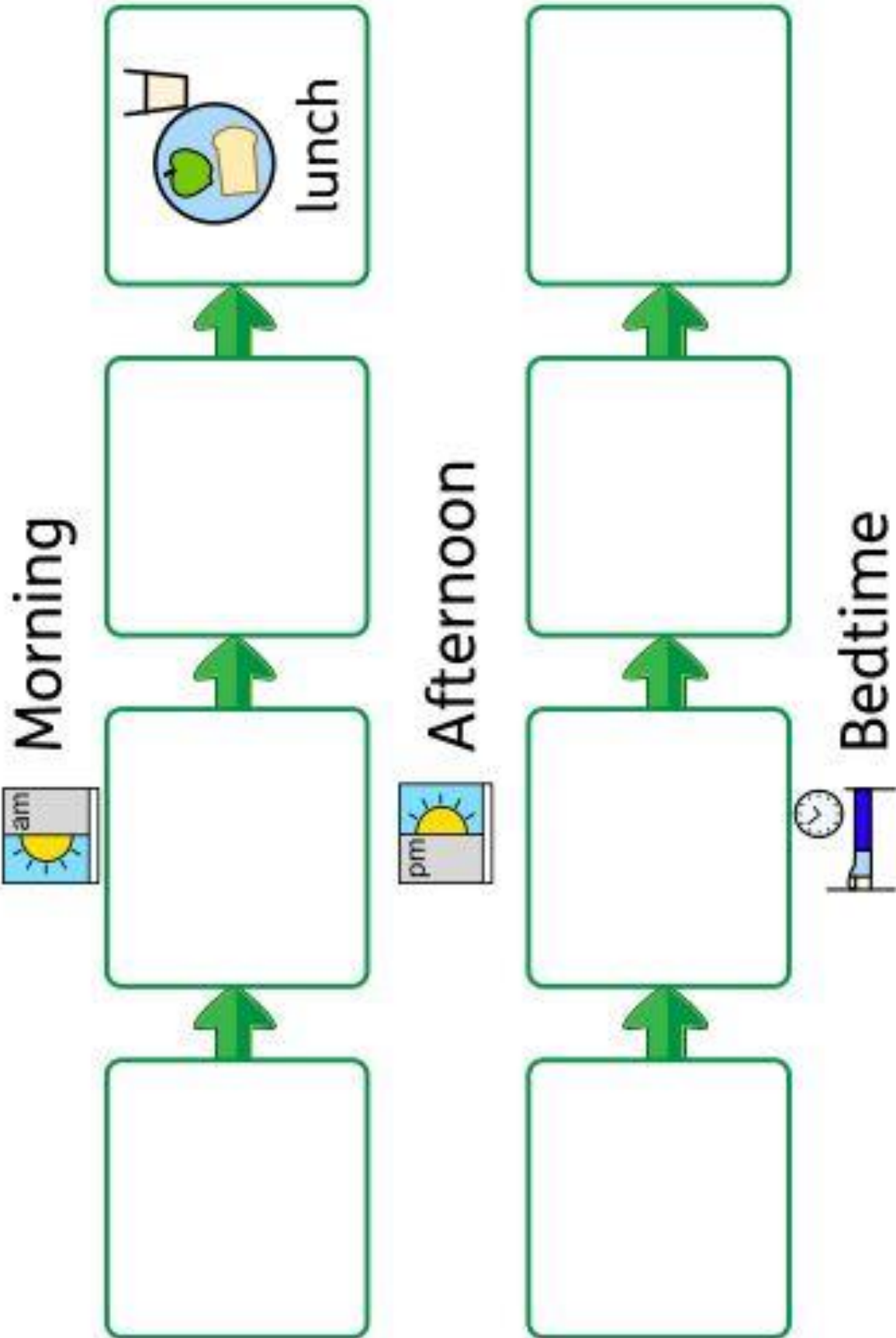
Yellow Popsicle

I SPY: POPSICLES



Appendix 2


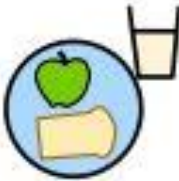





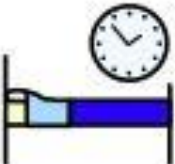








 Sunday	
 Saturday	
 Friday	
 Thursday	
 Wednesday	
 Tuesday	
 Monday	



Appendix 3 cont

 <p>park</p>	 <p>cinema</p>	 <p>bowling</p>	 <p>beach</p>
 <p>swimming</p>	 <p>walk</p>	 <p>shopping</p>	 <p>cafe</p>
 <p>restaurant</p>	 <p>forest</p>	 <p>home</p>	 <p>visiting friends</p>
 <p>visiting family</p>	 <p>Tv</p>	 <p>garden</p>	 <p>swings</p>
 <p>trampoline</p>	 <p>toys</p>	 <p>cooking</p>	 <p>crafts</p>
 <p>washing</p>	 <p>car</p>	 <p>computer</p>	 <p>Ipad</p>






Appendix 3 cont

 <p>breakfast</p>	 <p>lunch</p>	 <p>dinner</p>	 <p>playground</p>
 <p>reading</p>	 <p>relaxation</p>	 <p>chores</p>	 <p>bedtime</p>
 <p>sleep</p>	 <p>shop</p>	 <p>party</p>	 <p>zoo</p>
 <p>bike</p>	 <p>scooter</p>	 <p>games</p>	 <p>theatre</p>

My Morning Routine

	Go to toilet	
	Get dressed	
	Eat breakfast	
	Clean teeth	
	Wash Face	
	Brush hair	
	Suncream on	
	Shoes on	

My Bedtime Routine

	Get washed	
	PJs on	
	Clean teeth	
	Go to toilet	
	Read story	

Advice on Learning to Tie Shoelaces

Tips:

- Practice with a shoe or lacing board on your lap initially before trying it on your foot
- Using two different coloured laces (tied together and laced through the shoe) can help the child identify which side to cross over / pull etc.
- If the child has difficulty tying an initial knot, try using pipe cleaners as they will better hold their shape. Move on to laces when they can successfully tie a knot.
- When practicing tying shoes on feet, have the child sit on the floor with their knee up or resting their foot on a chair or step to make it easier and more stable when reaching.
- Think about also teaching trouble-shooting such as what to do if you pull a lace too far through, how to untie an unwanted knot, how to tighten a loose knot etc.



There are a number of ways you can tie shoelaces:

- Standard method - https://youtu.be/lvL8m_iblk4 This can be difficult for children who struggle with bilateral coordination (using both hands)
- Bunny Ears - <https://youtu.be/M8DNQvyGnf0> This can also be difficult for children who have reduced fine motor coordination.
- Super fast - quite tricky but some children like the fluidity of the movements and it looks cool! <https://youtu.be/aAel7p-Tkc>

The following are OT favourite methods that are particularly good if the child can already manage a standard knot but struggles with the rest of the process.

- Leaving a Loop - <https://youtu.be/o4q2vKlvuXM>
- Using the eyelets - <https://youtu.be/AWM0XHHObLk> You can use the eyelets right from the start or tie a basic knot first. Tying the knot first can feel more secure.

Appendix 7





Outdoor Sensory Motor Scavenger Hunt

Can you find something...

- to climb? to jump over?
- to play catch with? to walk across?
- to crawl under? to balance on your head?
- to roll across the ground? that is rough?
- that is heavy? that is soft?
- that is smooth? that is hard?
- that is squishy? that is loud?