

Rochester Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders

Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities

in the Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics

MAKING A SENSORY KIT

Sensory kits are a set of tools that can be used to support individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the community. Sensory kits can be made to fit someone's needs, and used anywhere. For example, they can be used during times of transition, or in situations that are new or overwhelming, such as a doctor's appointment, a crowded place, or a noisy environment. Sensory items help the person focus and process the surroundings or it can give them an outlet to help themselves cope with a stressful situation. Typically, items in the kit are small and easy to carry and can be used to either provide stimulation or calm the person down.

Finding successful tools can feel like a guessing game. For example, the items that some may find entertaining or calming could feel like too much to others. Using this tip sheet will help you identify the items you may want to use to build your kit, as the best-fit items are person-dependent.

When you are building a kit try to identify if the individual is a sensory **seeker** or **avoider**.

People who are sensory avoiders may be described as "picky" or "sensitive" to certain things. They may show behaviors such as avoiding messy activities, preference for quiet, avoidance of physical contact with people, or dislike of certain textures, sounds, or smells.

Someone that seeks sensory input may be very interested in the sight, smell, sound, or feel of things. They also might be very active or seek out physical input, such as movement or pressure.

Some individuals may have both sensory-seeking and sensory-avoiding behaviors or may change from seeking to avoiding from time to time. Understanding the likes and dislikes of the person can help you identify what items to include in a sensory kit.

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Here are some items to consider:

TOUCH

- Crocheted or knit items
- Tag blanket
- Stretchy bands
- Squishy balls
- "Koosh" balls
- Fidget cubes
- Nail brushes
- Play dough or putty
- Mini massager
- Weighted vest or blanket
- Chewy tubes (p's q's)

SIGHT

- Social Stories
- Timers or Break cards
- Books
- Light toys such as flash lights, globes
- Items that contain glitter
- Mirrors

SOUND

- Noise cancelling head phones
- Rain sticks
- Music player



Having items in the environment that provide support and are stimulating or calming can be helpful when in a new situation and allow the individual to more successfully engage.

-Erin Palma RDN, CDN, parent advocate

CONTACT



For more information, contact the Rochester Regional Center for Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Or visit us at www.SCDD.URMC.edu/RRCASD

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