





Sensory processing differences are unique to every individual, this list is not exhaustive - ensure you refer to a child's OT recommendations if provided. Please speak to your local Occupational Therapy (OT) team if you have any queries or concerns.

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Bobby's Little Explorer Kit



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Bobby is our dog from The Sensational Thinking Project, a very special initiative that was founded in the Children's Occupational Therapy team, to help raise awareness of the importance of sensory processing and development and lessen the impact of sensory differences on children's lives. Bobby has put together a special kit to help your child to explore their senses with you and to promote their development during their visit to our hospital.





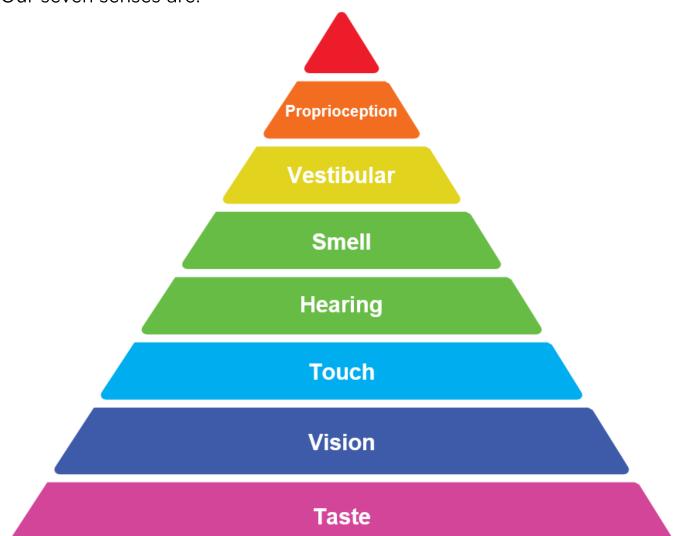


Why Sensory Play?

Sensory processing and integration (i.e. how we take in and make sense of the world around us) is essential for learning and development and develops through all daily occupations such as play, feeding and bath time.

It underpins key developments such as body awareness, motor skills and self-regulation as well as forming the foundations for learning development.

Did you know that we have 7 senses?



Our seven senses are:









Vestibular

This sense helps you to detect movement, know where your body is in space and can be calming for some children. It is closely linked with the visual system so rolling a ball or spinning a toy can create the same sensation through watching it. Holding your child or helping with repositioning can help promote the development of this system.

Proprioception





Smell

This sense is very closely linked to taste and to the memory area of the brain. It is important that your child is exposed to positive, non-noxious smells and to remember that they will know your smell and find this comforting. Eating by your child's bedside, even if your child is nil by mouth, helps to promote exposure to different smells and normalises it in preparation for going home.

This is the OT's (Occupational Therapist's) favourite

deep-pressure and can be promoted in various ways,

such as through massage, cuddles or blowing bubbles.

sense for the positive effects on building body

awareness, development of motor skills and it's

calming abilities. It is otherwise known as

Hearing

This is a complex sense and children can often find it tricky transitioning home where it is very quiet compared to the hospital, which can often disrupt sleep patterns. It is also a key sense for language development and for understanding the concept of distance. It is an important sense to protect at times too making sure your child has opportunity for 'quiet times' to ensure that your child's brain can rest and process all of the wonderful learning that they are doing!









Touch



The sensation of touch has a very important role in bonding, reducing stress and promoting emotional regulation for your child. Comforting your child with cuddles or simply allowing them to be close to you will be helpful for them to associate positive, secure feelings with touch. Providing a soft, fluffy blanket or toy will also help them to settle during periods of discomfort or sleeping troubles when you cannot always be with them. Look for opportunities to explore different textures to promote learning and tolerating different experiences.

Vision

Vision is important for helping us to understand our bodies and how to move around our environment. It also has huge value as a learning tool by watching others and the world around us. At wakeful times during the day help your child access bright, colourful patterns and contrasts through toys, books and things around us to promote their visual perception. Periods of low lighting levels are important to help establish and maintain a good sleep-wake cycle.





Taste

Taste is very important for the ingestion of food and appetite, including swallowing and salivation. Even if your child is nil by mouth you can still promote positive taste experiences through smell or through mouth cares.









What's in Bobby's Kit?

In the bag you will find 6 items (all wipe-able or washable at 60 degrees c). You can use the items during your stay, bring the kit along to Bobby's Little Explorer's Group if there is one running on your ward and at home as and when suits you as you play with your child. We gently remind you to supervise your child at all times and to remove any items if they become damaged.

Here are some of the main benefits of each toy and how you can use them to promote sensory development:

Bubbles



Blow bubbles in front or above your child as they are seated or as they lay on their backs. It is also a good distraction whilst laid on their stomachs if your child is able to do so. Whilst watching the bubbles float, your child will be developing their visual tracking skills and head-control which is subsequently important for vestibular development. As older children begin to reach out towards the bubbles they will start to work on their hand-eye coordination, upper limb control and finger isolation which then increases opportunities for touch exploration all of which is child-led.

Bright Floaty Scarf

The soft chiffon material can feel lovely against your skin and can help in promoting positive touch experiences. You can throw this up in the air and let it float down over your child, run it over their skin or play a fun game of peekaboo! The bright colours stimulate visual tracking and can encourage eye contact between you and your child. Young children seem to love the feel of these scarves and thus it encourages reaching and grasping and may well lead to oral exploration as they bring it to their mouths and a have a chew!











Mini Maraca

Perfect for mini hands to grasp and shake, it promotes auditory, tactile and proprioception stimulation - all important in helping children to understand how to move their bodies and recognise cause and effect. If you fancy a go with the maraca you can help your baby to learn about rhythm as you shake it to music. This is important for movement planning and language acquisition too.

Sensory Foil

Play or seat your child on the foil, or if this is too much for your child let them hold, scrunch and explore it in front of them. The crunchy foil gives your child lots of auditory, tactile and visual stimulation and helps them to make the connection between cause and effect, further motivating them to explore more.





Lift and Look Book

Story time may be part of your usual routine and it allows you to share some lovely time together as you read the story and they listen to your voice, language and look at the pictures. Your child may enjoy tracing the indented trails with some hand over hand help and helping to turn the pages to see who is peeping through the pages. Story time is a lovely activity to end on due to its calming auditory, tactile and proprioceptive input and ultimately giving you the moment to feel the unique connection between you and your child.

Finger Puppet

A little plush character (that may match your story book!) with dangly arms and legs can accompany the story or give your child something to hold during the story time but you can also use this little character to do some movement to music as you pop it on your finger and move it around to perhaps a short song or in make-believe play with your child. This not only works on your child's sensory development but also on those ideas of imaginative play!











Ask your ward to find out if your Occupational Therapist (OT), Play Specialist or Nursery Nurse is currently running Bobby's Little Explorer's Group and how to get involved. We may also be running our Sensational Ward Parent Sessions too which offers a short, face-to-face information session on why sensory development is important and what you can do to help.

Please do join us - it would be lovely to meet you and find out how you are getting on during your stay!

Children's Community Occupational TherapyTel: 0191 282 3452Email: nuth.physicaltherapyservices@nhs.net

Children's Acute Occupational Therapy(If your child is currently in hospital)Tel:0191 282 1281



These bags and books have been funded by



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