



KEY INFORMATION

Key skills targeted:

- Sensory processing and integration difficulties
- Self esteem

Age range:

- Primary Age Range

Staffing implications:

- Adult to lead activity

Resources needed:

- This is activity dependent; examples would include apparatus typically used in a primary setting such as beanbags, benches, PE mats and hula hoops.

Likely outcomes:

- Improvement in concentration giving them an optimum level of alertness
- Help to meet sensory integration and processing needs
- Promotes improvement in physical, social and emotional well-being

Sensory Circuits

Sensory Circuits is a sensory motor skills programme for children.



AIMS

Sensory Circuits is a sensory motor skills programme that helps to give children a positive start to their day and supports their sensory integration and processing needs. Children participate in a 15-minute session of activities designed to improve brain processing efficiency, enabling children to reach the optimum level of alertness, they require, to concentrate in lessons.

OVERVIEW

Sensory circuits were developed by Jane Horwood, an occupational therapist with twenty-five years' experience in liaison with NHS paediatric occupational therapists in Peterborough to provide a solution to sensory integration and sensory processing difficulties demonstrated by children on a daily basis. Sensory circuits were created from necessity in schools, as a solution to groups of children identified as requiring similar intervention. Discussions with a SENco and teaching assistant in one Peterborough school, ensured that a group of children were led in a short circuit of prescribed activities at a set time each day. It was very successful; not only did the children attending the circuit enjoy taking part but functional improvements within the classroom setting were evident. At this point the sensory circuits programme was established as a tool to help settings meet need and to improve the negative impacts that sensory processing and integration differences can have in the classroom.



Who will this benefit?

The child who has sensory integration and sensory processing difficulties which impacts their concentration and academic progress in class.

How to implement

Firstly, identification of children with sensory integration and sensory processing difficulties who would benefit from this programme needs to take place. Initial assessments and observational records can be completed using formats in the book provided, by the adult/adults running these sessions.

When a suitable mix of children with varying sensory needs has been chosen, a risk assessment has taken place and parental consent has been obtained, a sensory circuit session should be established. Ideally the circuit should be held first thing in the morning, if this is possible.

The first activities must be that of an alerting nature for example bouncing, skipping, jumping and spinning.

The next set of activity should be about organising providing a motor challenge to the children such as bending a rope into different shapes.

The third set of activity should be calming activities that use deep pressure proprioceptive input and heavy work.

The activities must be completed in this order to have maximum effect and to ensure optimum impact for child in terms of their attention and concentration when they return to the classroom. Activities and their effectiveness should be reviewed at regular intervals.

Next steps

Sensory Circuits provides an effective structured resource for schools, to meet individual sensory needs within a range of group activities offering children daily sensory motor input Equipment required is generally available within school's PE resources and it only takes between twenty and thirty minutes a day to set up and deliver effective provision to a group of children. Assessment materials, activity ideas, observation sheets, checklists and sample letters to home to parents are all included as resources to establish this intervention.