

# Sensory Spaces

## What is a sensory space?

A sensory space is somewhere a person can go to self-regulate. In this space, materials like fidget tools, mini trampolines, balance beams, or crash pads can be used to support the release of energy through big motor movement or have a calming effect on the user.



**1 in 5 Oregon** children have a challenge that interferes with learning or behavior, **including dyslexia, ADHD, autism, and trauma.**

## Who needs a sensory space?

Anyone can benefit from using the tools in a sensory space, but especially the one in five kids who learn differently. For these kids, their nervous systems need some extra help to regulate themselves. The tools provided in a sensory space provide the needed stimulation or calming effect for these kids to thrive.

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## Why use sensory spaces?

Teachers are thrilled to have Sensory Spaces available as tools to help students cope with stress and trauma. -Denise Wright, Director of Student Services, Centennial School District

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- Sensory spaces help children get in the right state of mind for learning
- They encourage movement, which sends calming signals to one's brain
- They teach students how to recognize and take care of their own needs
- They can help reduce behaviors that disrupt learning
- They provide a safe space for self-regulation
- They teach self-awareness to know when you're dysregulated
- They provide a place to avoid overstimulation and recharge
- They help reduce feelings of stress and anxiety and help to develop healthy responses to stress

# Sensory Tools & Sensory Processing



Sensory tools allow students to move while their brains are learning. These tools help kids manage their emotions and their bodies so they can focus during class and homework time.

They strengthen students' self-regulation skills, improve focus, and calm the student down to get them in the right state of mind for learning.

**There are many types of sensory tools designed to give children any of several different kinds of sensory stimulation, such as:**

Balance beams, yoga balls, and rocking chairs to provide vestibular (balance) input



Soft blankets, rough sandpaper, and fidgets like zipper bracelets or stress balls to provide tactile (touch) input



Using lotion or perfume, smelling flowers, or using essential oils provides olfactory (smell) input



Stretch bands, body socks, and compression vests offer stimulation to the muscles and joints and provide proprioceptive input



Loud music, repeating words and phrases (also known as echolalia), and rain sticks offer auditory (sound) input



Blowing bubbles or balloons or drinking carbonated water can provide internal organ stimulation, or interoceptive input

