

# Sensory Circuits at home:

Many Autistic people have differences in the way they perceive and process sensory information. It is important to remember that sensory differences can impact significantly on play and learning as differences interpreting sensory information can have an impact on how an individual feels, thinks, behaves or responds. This may affect how your child/young person is able to focus and engage in play and learning opportunities at any given time. Sensory circuits can be a useful way of providing some of the sensory feedback an individual might be seeking. More information on understanding sensory behaviour can be found at:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/behaviour/sensory-world.aspx>

## **The background behind sensory circuits:**

Participation in a short sensory motor circuit is a great way both to energise and settle children and young people into the day. The aim is to focus concentration in readiness for the day's activities. Sensory circuits can be completed at regular times throughout the day. It is important that the experiences included in a sensory circuit reflect your child/young person's sensory preferences and avoid any sensory experiences they are aversive to.

## **Sensory Circuits:**

The order is important! The circuit should be an active, physical and fun activity that children/young people enjoy. Ideally it should be completed first thing in the morning, and after lunch if at all possible. Some children and young people may require more circuits throughout the day.

The Sensory Circuit provides a sequence of activities done repeatedly to provide the child/young person with the right type of sensory input in order to calm and organise them for the day ahead, ready for daily activities. The idea is to start with something alerting, move to an organisation stage and then finally to a calming phase.

**When you put together a sensory circuit choose 2 alerting activities, 2 organising activities and 1 calming activity.**

# Alerting Section

The aim of this section is to provide vestibular (sense of balance) and proprioceptive stimulation within a controlled setting. This prepares the brain for learning.

Activities can include such activities as:

- bouncing on a mini trampoline, space hopper or gym ball.
- spinning a hoop
- bunny hops / crab walks / frog jumping/squat jumps
- Gym ball for rolling over and bouncing on
- skipping
- action rhymes – row row row your boat, heads and shoulders etc.

# Organising Section

This section includes activities that require motor (muscle) sensory processing, balance and timing. The child/young person needs to organise their body, plan their approach and do more than one thing at a time in a sequential order (one after the other).

Activities include tasks such as:

- balancing on a beam / walking along a straight line (e.g. coloured tape on the floor)
- log rolling
- climbing wall bars
- throwing bean bags into a target or small balls/scrunched up paper into a bin.
- arm push ups against the wall
- squats (no jump), shallow lunge steps
- blowing bubbles or blowing a paper ball to a target
- Skipping and jumping over a moving rope

These are skills that may increase a child/young person's focus, attention span and performance

# Calming Section

The calming activities are very important as they provide input to ensure that your child/young person leaves the circuit and engages in their activities calm, centred and ready for the day ahead.

Activities include proprioceptive or deep pressure activities such as:

- placing feet or hands in weighted bean bags (wheat bags also work)
- having balls rolled over their backs (ideally medium/large gym ball as demonstrated in picture below)
- hot-dogs (rolling child/young person up tightly in a blanket)
- Massaging hands, feet, arms or legs.

*(Proprioception refers to the body's ability to sense movement within joints and joint position. This ability enables us to better understand where our limbs are in space without having to look. It is important in all everyday movements but especially so in complicated sporting movements, where precise coordination is essential. This coordinated movement is a result of the normal functioning of the proprioceptive system.)*

Below are some ideas and visuals for sensory circuits that could be completed at home but there are lots of other ideas you could include

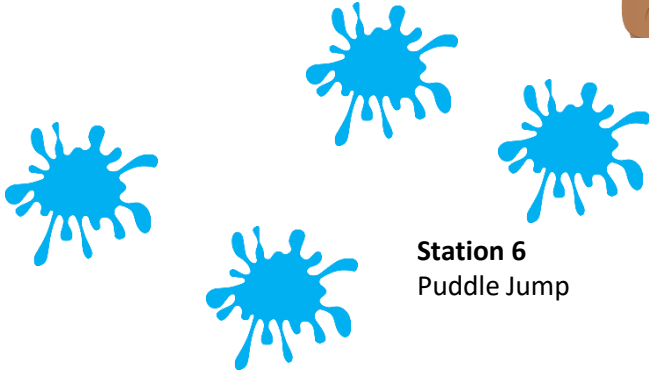


# Sensory Circuit Floor Plan

**Station 1**  
Hand Push Ups



**Station 6**  
Puddle Jump



**Station 2**  
Lily Pad Jump



**Station 7**  
Calming



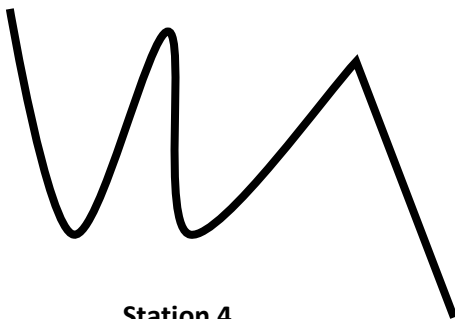
**Station 5**  
Positional Jump



**Station 3**  
Bear Crawl



**Station 4**  
Balancing



# STATION 1

## Hand Push



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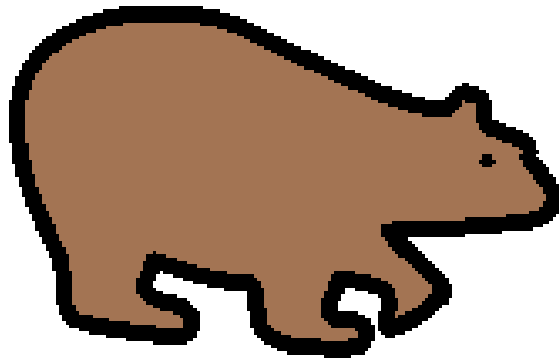
# STATION 2

## Lily Pad Jump



# STATION 3

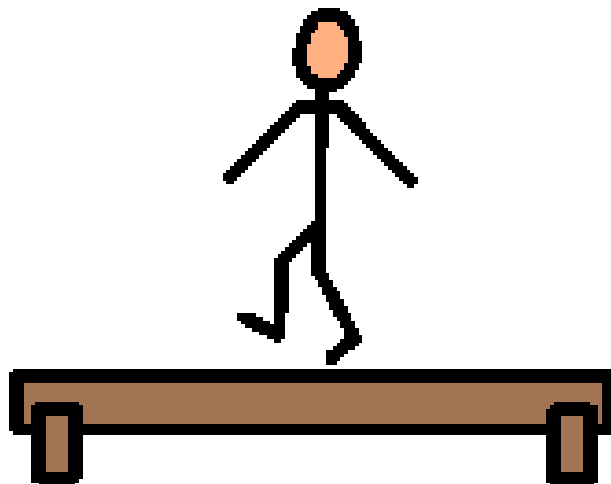
## Bear Crawl



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# STATION 4

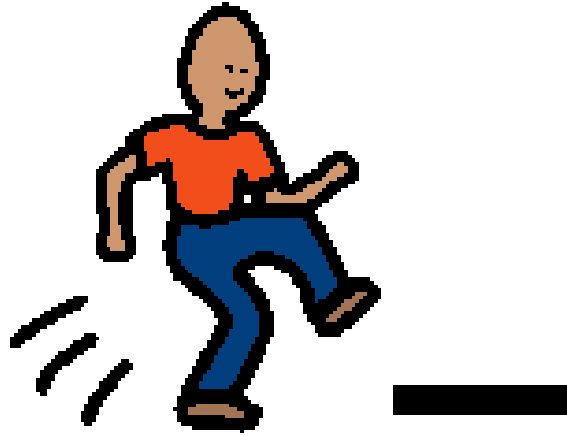
## Balancing





# STATION 5

## Positional



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# STATION 6

## Puddle Splash



# STATION 7

## Calming



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## Sensory





With thanks to Sarah Empson (formely of SENIT) and Cheryl Torrence (Windmill Music Federation).