

## Environmental Supports

### Sensory Kit and Self-Regulation Spaces

Consider using dedicated 'calm' and 'movement' spaces or tools within your program area. These spaces and tools don't need to be elaborate - they may be a blanket on the sidelines of a soccer field or a few items placed in a corner of a room. All children should be encouraged to use these spaces and tools when needed - such as when they begin to feel overwhelmed, when they are getting distracted, when they are seeking more or less sensory inputs or when they just need a moment to process a big emotion.

Do not use these spaces or tools as a form of punishment - focus on using them to assist children in grounding themselves. Encourage children to try them out or guide an escalating child to a self-regulation space and quietly model using some of the tools yourself. See below for items to include within your 'sensory kit' and self-regulation spaces.



### Calming Spaces and Tools

Dedicated "calm spaces" can help children manage stress or take a break when overwhelmed. Effective calming tools often appeal to senses such as sight, smell, touch or hearing. They may help a child focus their attention, slow down rapid breathing and reduce anxiety or emotional dysregulation.

Items to consider including:

- noise cancelling headphones
- soft stuffed animals
- fidget toys
- play doh or stress balls
- blanket
- bubbles
- scented hand lotion
- sunglasses



### Movement Spaces and Tools

A movement space may be a spot where children can climb, wiggle, dance, practice sports drills or otherwise move their body. Effective movement tools help children use their vestibular (balance) or proprioception (body position) needs to get grounded or increase focus.

Items to consider including:

- yoga or stretching flash cards
- resistance stretching bands
- skipping rope for jumping or use as a 'balance beam'



### Sensory Considerations

Consider the lighting, noise, temperature and smells in your program environment. Avoid overly busy visual environments when possible and look for ways to lessen distracting stimuli - try dimming lights, clearing surfaces or removing unnecessary items. You may not be able to make changes to your program environment, but being aware of these elements prepares your for potential reactions from children who may struggle with environmental factors.