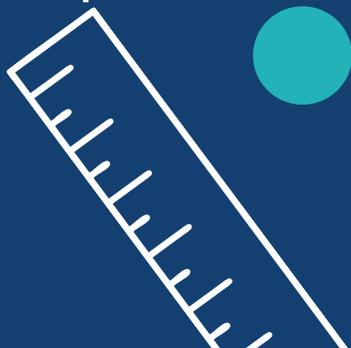
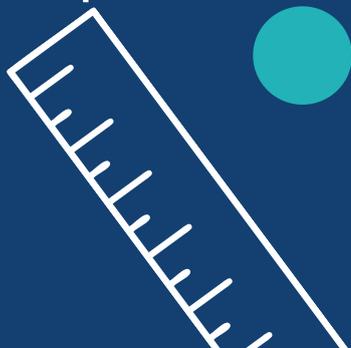
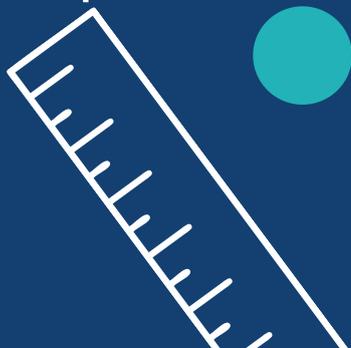


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YOUTH SERVICES



# Making a Sensory Bin at Home

Special Thanks to the  
Lake Orion Community Schools  
Special Education Department



# Why Sensory Bins?

Children and even adults learn best and retain the most information when they engage their senses.

Providing opportunities for children to actively use their senses as they explore their world through 'sensory play' is crucial to brain development – it helps to build nerve connections in the brain's pathways.

Play helps children express themselves and put thoughts into words.

Play helps children think symbolically, so they understand that spoken and written words can stand for real objects and experiences.

# The Sensory Systems



- The Tactile System – touching and feeling
- The Auditory System – hearing and listening
- The Visual System – seeing
- The Gustatory System – tasting
- The Olfactory System – smelling
- The Proprioceptive System – limbs and spatial awareness
- The Vestibular System – inner ear and spatial orientation
- The Interoception System – internal bodily sensations



# 10 reasons why sensory play is beneficial

1. Builds nerve connections in the brain's pathways, which lead to the child's ability to complete more complex learning tasks.
2. Supports language development, cognitive growth, problem solving skills, and social interaction.
3. Aids in developing and enhancing memory.
4. Great for calming an anxious or frustrated child.
5. Helps children learn sensory attributes (hot, cold, sticky, dry, etc.)
6. Refines the child's thresholds for different sensory information - gets them used to new sensory inputs
7. Can be helpful for children that are tactile defensive (that don't like touching certain textures).
8. Encourages imaginative play
9. Develop fine motor skills – using muscles in the hands, fingers, and wrists.
10. Facilitates exploration and naturally encourage children to use scientific processes while they play, create, investigate and explore.

# Important Rules for Sensory Bin Play

- **CHOKING HAZARDS** - if your child is still putting everything into their mouth, be mindful of what you are putting into the bin.
- Some textures have a shelf life, you may need to recycle or replenish them.
- **DO NOT** force your kid's hand into a texture. If they don't like it or are having a hard time touching it, respect that and try using tools to ease them into it.

# Sensory Bin Containers

- ★ Plastic Bins - Size and dimensions are up to you. Recommended: 12-25 qt. plastic storage totes
- Larger shipping boxes - Cardboard is not as durable as plastic, but can provide a sensory experience in a pinch. \*Cannot be used with wet sensory items.
- Tupperware - Perfect for smaller hands! Can be used as a travel sensory bin!
- Baking pans/dishes

## Tips:

- If keeping sensory bins: Use similar size totes for maximum storage. You can stack them in a closet or corner of the room.
- Don't go too tall - Too high of walls could hinder play.
- Put an old blanket or large towel under the bin for easier clean up. If possible, play over a hard, easy to clean surface rather than carpeted areas.

# Sensory Bin Fillers\*

## Food Fillers\*\*

- Unpopped Popcorn
- Uncooked Rice
- Uncooked Pasta
- Dried Beans (Any variety of bean will do. And you can try the different types of beans for a different sensory experience!)
- Marshmallows
- Seeds (Same as beans)
- Water
- Whip cream
- Your imagination is the limit!

## Non-Food Fillers

- Packing Peanuts
- Shredded Paper
- Waterbeads
- Aquarium Rocks
- Play Sand
- Outside Pebbles (washed, of course)
- Shaving cream (better with shallow bins)
- Your imagination is the limit!

**CANNOT STRESS ENOUGH \*\*CHOKING HAZARDS! \*\***  
You know your child best, use your judgement as to what filler would be safest for them.

\*CHOKING HAZARDS! Use your best judgement as to which filler to use with your child.

\*\*Expires. Will need to be replenished every so often.

# Sensory Bin Manipulatives\*

- Small toys - like toy cars/trucks, bath toys
- Crayons or crayon pieces
- Packing Peanuts
- Shredded or scrap pieces of paper
- Buttons
- LEGOs
- Easter Eggs
- Marbles
- Game pieces (like chess, checkers, etc.)
- Decorative pebbles
- Shaving cream (dollops)
- Outside pebbles (washed, of course)
- Your imagination is the limit!

**CANNOT STRESS ENOUGH**

**\*\*CHOKING HAZARDS! \*\***

You know your child best, use your judgement as to what filler would be safest for them.

# Sensory Bin Tools

- Scoops
- Spoons
- Measuring cups/spoons
- Salad tongs
- Tweezers
- Ladles
- Spaghetti Forks
- Funnels
- Sponges (best for wet sensory)
- Aquarium Net (best for wet sensory)
- Ice cube trays (for filling/sorting)
- Magnifying glass
- Basters
- Your imagination is the limit!



# Sensory Bin Games/Play

- Pick out items of a certain color
- Pick out items of a certain shape
- "How many \_\_\_\_\_ can you find?"
- "How many items can you find in \_\_\_ seconds?"
- Scoop and fill
- "How many items can fit?"
- "What happens in the bin when...?"
- Introduce concepts of direction and depth (left/right, shallow/deep, etc.)
- "How does the [filler] feel?"
- "What sound does the [filler] make when you drop in into the bin?"
- "What does the [filler] smell like?"

## Tips:

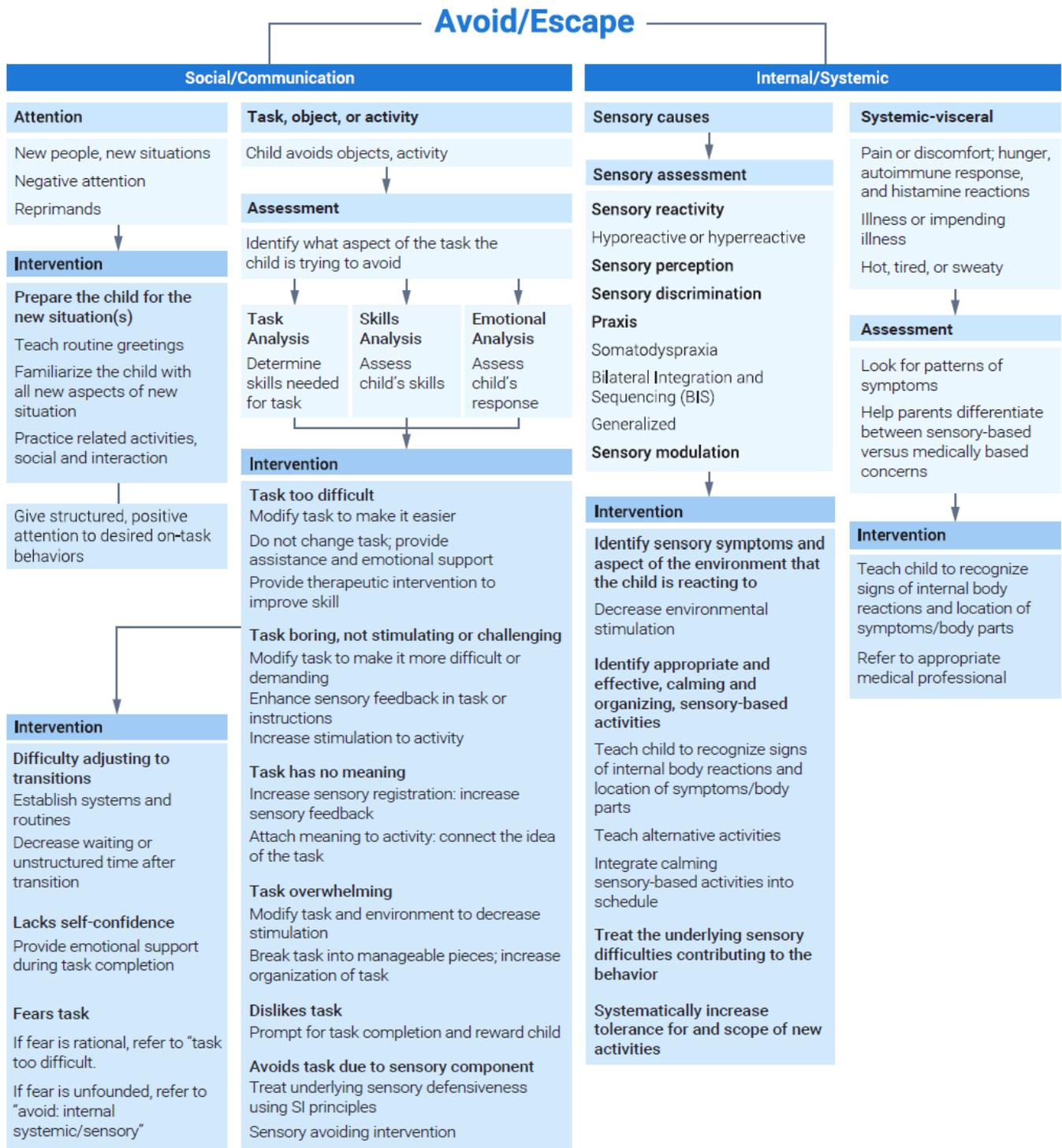
- There are many ways to enjoy your sensory bin besides letting your child explore with their senses. Make it a learning experience! Play is a great way teaching children basic concepts from math, language, and science.

# Sensory Intervention



## Intervention for Challenging Behaviors

Carolyn Murray-Slutsky, MS OTR, C/NDT, FAOTA and Betty Paris, PT, M.Ed., C/NDT



# Resources

## Why Sensory Play

- [www.educationalplaycare.com/blog/sensory-play-important-development](http://www.educationalplaycare.com/blog/sensory-play-important-development)

## Sensory Intervention

- [www.growinghandsonkids.com](http://www.growinghandsonkids.com)
- [www.spdfoundation.net](http://www.spdfoundation.net)

## Sensory Bin Resources

- [www.yourkidstable.com/ultimate-list-of-sensory-bin-ideas/](http://www.yourkidstable.com/ultimate-list-of-sensory-bin-ideas/)
- [www.littlebinsforlittlehands.com/how-to-make-sensory-bins-sensory-play/](http://www.littlebinsforlittlehands.com/how-to-make-sensory-bins-sensory-play/)
- Pinterest - Search "Sensory Bins"

## Sensory Bins for Toddlers and Babies

- [www.thebump.com/a/sensory-bins](http://www.thebump.com/a/sensory-bins)