

Sensory Sanctuary

Informational Guide

Learn more about sensory spaces, the American Library Association's Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities Grant, items in our Sensory Sanctuary, and other library resources.



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Welcome to the Sensory Sanctuary!

The Sensory Sanctuary is a new sensory space in the David & Joyce Milne Public Library designed for patrons of all ages and needs. The space can be adjusted to provide either a calming, low-stimulation environment or a more engaging sensory experience based on individual preferences. Sensory spaces can offer meaningful mental health and wellness benefits, particularly within places of learning and community connection like libraries.

Our Sensory Sanctuary was shaped by feedback from our library community through dedicated conversations focused on sensory spaces, as well as a brief survey made available for those unable to attend the in-person discussions.

With that feedback, along with the incredible support and funding from the Friends of the David and Joyce Milne Public Library and a grant from the American Library Association's Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities initiative, we have been able to bring this truly one-of-a-kind space to our community.

About the Grant

We were honored to receive the American Library Association's Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities Grant in the amount of \$10,000. As part of this initiative, Val, our Community Empowerment Intern, facilitated a series of Community Conversations focused specifically on sensory spaces within the library. These conversations were designed to encourage patron participation and gather meaningful feedback to help shape the vision and design of the space.

This grant supports small and rural libraries in improving accessibility within their facilities, services, and programs to better serve individuals with disabilities. Our project centered on the creation of a sensory room – a dedicated, welcoming environment designed to provide comfort, regulation, and support for individuals with sensory processing needs.

We are deeply grateful to the Friends of the David and Joyce Milne Public Library and the American Library Association for their generous support in making this initiative possible.

About Sensory Spaces

A sensory room is a flexible, supportive environment designed to meet a wide range of sensory needs. Through the use of sensory tools, lighting, seating, tactile objects, and calming or stimulating activities, individuals can regulate emotions, decompress, refocus, or release energy in a way that feels comfortable and beneficial to them.

Because sensory needs vary from person to person, sensory spaces are intentionally adaptable. The lighting, sounds, textures, and level of sensory input can be adjusted to create either a calming, low-stimulation environment or a more engaging, high-stimulation experience – helping users feel balanced, comfortable, and supported without becoming overstimulated or understimulated.

Sensory rooms are appropriate for all actual and developmental ages and can benefit anyone. Certain triggers can cause people with sensory needs to have a sensory overload or meltdown. A sensory space eliminates these triggers and provides soothing sensory input, so the user can regulate and feel calm.

Sensory rooms provide the sensory input that the user needs. “Sensory” doesn’t necessarily mean “calm” – these spaces can soothe or acclimate the user to sounds, lights, vibrations and textures. A sensory room can be used to:

- **Teach cause and effect:** Children and adults can interact with sensory equipment and observe the consequences of their actions. Users can learn about cause and effect as they understand how their actions trigger a response.
- **Provide an opportunity to explore freely:** A sensory space allows users to explore their environment, work on sensory integration, self-regulate and more.
- **Increase concentration and focus:** Using a sensory room can help individuals with sensory needs improve their attention and focus.
- **Heighten environmental awareness:** Sensory spaces bring the user’s sensory system into equilibrium, making it easier to be aware of their surroundings.
- **Promote cognitive development:** Sensory equipment motivates users to learn and grow as they explore sensory inputs.
- **Decrease aggressive behaviors:** Sensory therapy is effective for managing stress and aggression. These safe spaces allow children and adults to play and explore without exposure to sensory triggers.

- **Provide a sense of security and calmness:** Devices with soothing sensory input can help users self-regulate or co-regulate when they feel overstimulated.
- **Encourage vocalization and communication:** A sensory room can be used as a speech therapy tool, helping users improve their communication skills.
- **Improve eye-hand coordination and sensory motor skills:** Sensory spaces promote physical abilities to make users aware of their body position and movement and use this sensory input to complete actions like pressing a button or grabbing a toy.
- **Promote social interactions:** Sensory rooms provide opportunities for users to interact and develop social skills.
- **Provide mental and physical relaxation:** A sensory meltdown puts a person in fight-or-flight mode. The calming effect of a sensory room allows the nervous system to recover.

Information sourced from enablingdevices.com

Rules of Use

We're glad you're here! This space is designed to support comfort, focus, and well-being for all. Please help us keep it welcoming for everyone:

- The room can accommodate up to four (4) people at a time.
- Reservations are for the person booking the space and the guests they include.
- Children age 10 and under should be accompanied by a parent or caregiver at all times.
- This space is intended for personal use. If you're interested in using it for professional services (such as therapy sessions), please speak with the Library Director in advance.
- To keep the space clean and comfortable, we encourage you to remove your shoes. Socks are required while using the equipment.
- If you notice anything that isn't working or needs attention, please let a staff member know - we appreciate your help!
- If an accident or issue occurs, please let staff know so we can assist.
- While using the space, please follow the Library Use Policy and Meeting Room Policy.
- All materials and equipment are for use within this space and should remain in the room.
- We ask that all equipment be used with care so it can be enjoyed by others. Misuse or theft may result in loss of access to the space.

Who do I inform when I am finished with the space?

When you're finished, please let a staff member know. We appreciate you leaving the space as you found it, and we'll take care of cleaning and resetting it for the next person.

What's inside our Sensory Sanctuary?



Animal and Fruit Squishies

These squish toys allow you to pinch, squeeze, and twist for tactile input. They support fine motor development and serve well as sensory fidget toys in classrooms or at home. The squishy slow rising action provides calming feedback, helping to ease stress and improve concentration.



Ball Mazes

These 3D maze ball toys allow users to observe the travel path and think about how to send the mini steel ball to the end; it can cultivate your spatial cognition and logical thinking, improve your mindfulness and patience that relieve your stress and promote inspiration.



Bean Bag *Available Upon Request*

Sink into an oversized bean bag couch filled with cloud-soft shredded memory-foam - no noisy beads - designed to provide gentle sensory comfort, calming pressure, and a quiet, cozy place to relax and decompress.



Bubble Fidgets

These stress-relieving pop pack toys are great for anyone. You can get emotional release and mental comfort by squeezing these toys.



Bubble Mirror

These mirrors are all about fascinating optical effects! Mini convex mirror bubbles invite curious children to spy themselves and their environment in new ways. Perfect for a sensory wall panel as it aids in emotional regulation and relaxation.



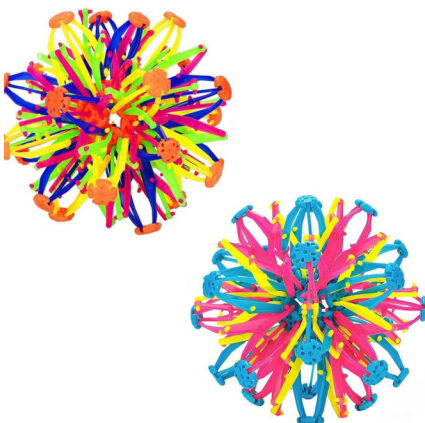
Bubble Tube

Provides gentle motion and soft light that helps set a peaceful environment in offices, therapy rooms, bedrooms, playrooms, classrooms, and reading corners.



Concentration Rocker

Flexible seating solution for everyone that features a protruded headrest for added comfort, great for playing your favorite video game, watching TV, reading, studying, meditating, or simply taking a moment to decompress.



Expanding Ball

Novel Expansion Ball provides calming tactile and movement-based sensory input through stretching, collapsing, and fidgeting motions that can help reduce anxiety, relieve stress, improve focus, and support self-regulation. Great for fidgeting at a desk, staying engaged while working or studying, or simply providing a quiet sensory outlet for restless hands.



Ferris Wheel

Not only is it a beautiful desktop decoration, it can help you focus, relieve daily life stress, or just relax during work hours.



Fiber Optic Lamp

It can help you relax and ease your tight emotion. This soothing mood light creates a stimulating and a calming environment for anyone.



Fidget Worms

The repetitive popping and wriggling actions help to relieve stress and anxiety. The sensory toys can be opened and closed, retracted, bent, and stretched like an accordion. They bounce back to their original shape after being squeezed, providing diverse and engaging play experiences.



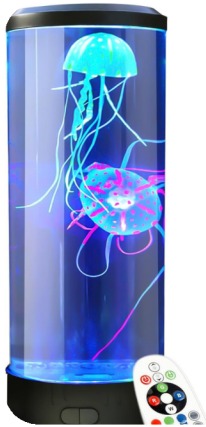
Gel Tiles

These gel tiles provide strong visual and tactile sensory input. The bright, flowing colors shift and swirl with movement, creating a calming and engaging visual experience while encouraging active movement like stepping, jumping, dancing, and hopping. They can support sensory regulation, focus, coordination, and body awareness, while also offering a fun outlet for movement and exploration.



Infinity Mirror

This circular infinity mirror sensory product combines a captivating visual experience with therapeutic benefits, making it an ideal addition to sensory rooms and environments for children.



Jellyfish Lamp

Enjoy the calming sights and gentle movement of the ocean with this hypnotic jellyfish aquarium lamp, designed to create a peaceful atmosphere and help reduce stress.



Light Projector

Galaxy light aurora projector featuring flowing lights, stars, soothing white noises, and music that provide calming visual and auditory sensory input for relaxation and stress relief.



Low-Light Lamps

This interactive touch lamp provides calming visual sensory input through soft, customizable lighting. The easy 360-degree touch controls allow users to quickly change colors with a simple tap, encouraging independence and sensory exploration. Its gentle glow creates a relaxing atmosphere that can support emotional regulation, focus, and relaxation.



Mad Mattr

Addictive, super-soft and satisfying dough-like material that shapes and molds easily. Hours of creative and stress-free fun. Press it, mold it, cut it, knead it, stretch it, squeeze it or just pull it slowly and watch it flow.



Magnetic Fidget Balls

The unique textures of these magnetic sensory balls offer a satisfying sensory experience, perfect for alleviating stress and anxiety. They're great for reducing tension and helping you unwind after long hours at your desk or screen.



Magnetic Fidget Sphere

The fidget magnet sphere is a therapeutic and calming stress reliever, a stimulating STEM learning tool, or an imaginative artistic medium. It's all in the eye of the beholder!



Mood Shape Light

The mood lighting has 18 colors & 10 brightness and 3 dynamic modes. Super vivid colors with mesmerizing ocean water ripples light projector for relaxation.



Net Fidget Balls

This sensory toy provides calming tactile and proprioceptive sensory input through squeezing, stretching, and repetitive hand movement. The flexible grid texture encourages fidgeting and hands-on interaction, which can help relieve stress, reduce tension, improve focus, and support emotional regulation.



Noise-Cancelling Headphones (Adults)

These noise-cancelling headphones provide important auditory sensory support by helping reduce overwhelming background noise and creating a more controlled listening environment. The oversized 40mm dynamic drivers deliver clear, detailed sound, which can promote focus, relaxation, emotional regulation, and comfort for individuals who are sensitive to noise or easily overstimulated.



Noise-Cancelling Headphones (Kids)

These noise-cancelling headphones provide valuable auditory sensory support for children who may become overwhelmed by loud or busy environments. With a Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) of 22dB, they help soften surrounding sounds to create a calmer, more comfortable experience. They can support emotional regulation, reduce sensory overload, and help children feel safer and more focused in stimulating environments.



Pipe Fidget

This sensory toy is a flexible, retractable tube that can be stretched, bent, and twisted into different shapes. It encourages stress relief, creative play, and motor skill development.



Putty

This heat-sensitive, color-changing putty for kids doubles as therapy putty for kids, supporting fine motor skill development, stress relief, and creative exploration.



Rubik's Cube

The Rubik's Cube features 6 colored sides, each made up of 9 squares; once the sides are jumbled up, you twist, turn, & rotate the Cube until each of the 6 sides has only 1 color. This toy is not only a fun brain puzzle, this puzzle toy is great to keep your hands moving in stressful moments.



Sensory Mat

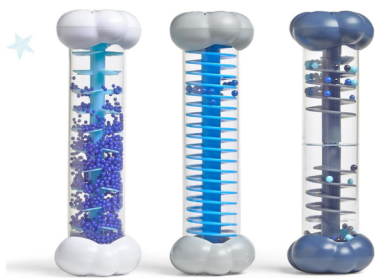
12 sensory mats of different colors and textures, the size of our sensory floor tiles allows you to experience different sensory stimulation in a comfortable tactile environment. Can help you control anxiety, release stress, and stay focused.



Slinky

Magic rainbow springs; a colorful and exciting addition to any occasion, adding a vivid burst of colors. Engages minds with their vibrant colors and springy action.

Includes 3 Sensory Tubes



Drizzle Shower Storm

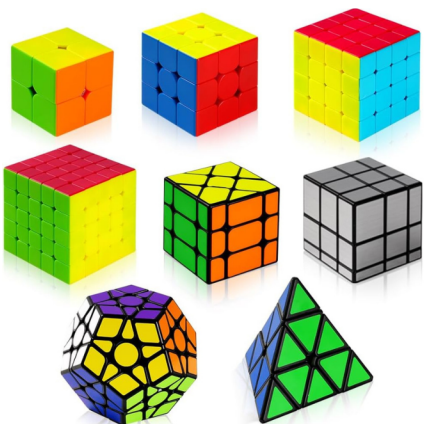
Sound of Rain

Explore how rain looks, sounds, and makes you feel! Leverage the power of rain sounds to help anyone calm their energy and focus. Each tube features the sound of a different rain pattern. Experience a peaceful drizzle, a steady rain shower, and a gentle storm.



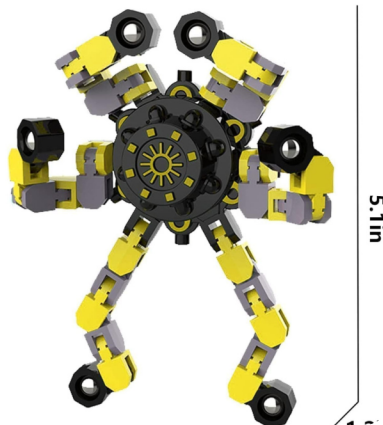
Spaghetti Toys

Made of TPR material, the stretchy spaghetti balls are safe and stretchy; you can pull them as long as you want, and when you let the tangled fidget toys go, they will go back to their original shapes without breaking and hurting you. Great for stress relief and concentration.



Speed Cubes

Having fun solving magic cube puzzles isn't just fun - it's brain training! These brain teaser toys help improve memory, focus, problem-solving, and hand-eye coordination. Great for everyone as they're a healthy way to stay sharp and relaxed without screens.



Spider Fidget

Feeling anxious or distracted? This fidget spinner helps channel nervous energy into calming, rhythmic motion. Great for improving concentration, reducing stress, and enhancing hand-eye coordination.



Squishy Balls

These fun squeeze balls are great therapeutic tools to fight boredom. Made of very soft touching materials custom-designed not just for stress relieving but also one fun indoor activity for kids and adults. Have loads of fun as you smooch, grasp, stretch, pull, toss and bounce these balls.



Star Projector

This star projector provides calming visual sensory input through soft, colorful light patterns that transform the room into a peaceful, immersive space. With 9 dreamy color modes and a quietly rotating display, it can create a soothing atmosphere that supports relaxation, emotional regulation, focus, and sensory exploration while minimizing overwhelming stimulation.



Touch Lights

These modular touch lights provide engaging visual and tactile sensory input through interactive, touch-sensitive lighting. The customizable hexagonal panels can be arranged into different shapes and patterns, encouraging creativity, sensory exploration, and hands-on interaction. Their soft illumination can create either a calming or stimulating atmosphere depending on the user's needs.



Tranquil Turtle

This plush turtle provides comforting visual, auditory, and tactile sensory input through its soft texture, gentle glowing lights, and calming sounds. The soothing combination can help promote relaxation, emotional regulation, comfort, and a sense of security, making it a supportive companion for winding down or decompressing.



Water Beads

These decorative sensory elements provide calming visual sensory input through soft colors, light reflection, and gentle movement when paired with water, candles, or floral displays. They can help create a peaceful and inviting atmosphere that supports relaxation, mindfulness, and sensory exploration.



Water Wheel Timer

Liquid hourglass timer filled with bright & colorful liquid bubbles that drip & drop as they move about. It helps improve focus, thinking and the ability to observe.



Weighted Blanket

Weighted blanket evenly distributes weight across the body. It wraps you in a calming embrace, extending the duration of a soothing feeling.



White Noise Machine

Constant, natural fan noise reduces sudden disruptions so you can focus when studying or using sensory tools.



Wonder Stars

The gentle glow emitted by these stars can help create a calming atmosphere in a dark sensory room. The soft illumination provides a subtle source of light, reducing the reliance on harsh, bright lights that may be overwhelming for some people.



Worry Stones

Our fidget sensory stone toys feature different textures, providing unique sensory stimulation for kids, teens, and adults. If you feel upset, simply rub your thumb against one to help relax and improve focus.

Additional Resources

Sensory items in our Thingdom:

milnelibrary.org/thingdom/health-wellness

milnelibrary.org/thingdom/arts-crafts



Health & Wellness



Arts & Crafts



More Reading on Sensory Spaces:

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