

EQUIPMENT

Recommendations

In the classroom



Providing a chew buddy, chewlerry or pencil chew topper can offer calming and grounding input for concentration



Dynamic seating or wobble/move'sit cushions can be helpful for children who need more vestibular input to feel calm. Observe the level of engagement when using these pieces, because children with under-developed sensory systems mind find it is a struggle to manage their core while using these. This can further impact learning and engagement



A visual timer can be helpful for predictability and supporting with transitions

Foot fidget options can be helpful for supporting concentration through movement.



Weighted lap pads can be helpful for calming and grounding input when sat at the desk or on the floor



Ear defenders or loops can be a useful tool for noisy/busy environments. Not to be used consistently throughout the day

EQUIPMENT

Recommendations

Creating a Sensory Den or Safe Space

A Sensory den or calm space can provide a vital moment of regulation for children who have experienced trauma or who have sensory processing differences. When carefully planned and introduced, it becomes a safe, predictable environment where children can feel secure, regain control, and self-regulate. Here are some key tips for creating and using one effectively:

- **Ensure the space is accessible when needed**

The sensory den should be easily accessible at the times a child needs it most—particularly after transitions, busy periods (like playtime), or when signs of dysregulation are beginning to show.

- **Make it feel like the child's own space**

A sense of ownership can help build emotional safety. Encourage the child to decorate the space or make a name sign. You might also create a reversible sign together, e.g., one side saying "I need 5 minutes" and the other "I'm happy for visitors," to give the child control over social interaction.

- **Establish clear, agreed ground rules**

Work collaboratively with the child to create simple rules for using the space. These might include:

- Only one person in the space at a time (unless otherwise agreed).
- If two children are using the space, the door or curtain should stay open.
- The space is used for calm-down or quiet time—not for chatting or playing games. This helps maintain the den as a calming, respectful environment.

- **Build den time into the daily routine**

Predictable access is key. Include short, regular visits to the sensory den in the child's visual or written timetable—particularly at times when calming input is most needed, such as:

- After morning break or lunch
- After a transition between activities
- Before challenging or focused learning tasks

- **Give the child a sense of control**

Offering limited, structured choice can support emotional regulation. Try:

"Would you like 5 minutes or 6 minutes in the den? You choose and set the timer."

Follow this with a gentle transition cue:

"After sensory den time, we're going to start our writing activity."

- **Include calming, sensory-rich elements**

Think soft, soothing, and regulating. Ideas include:

- Bean bags, cushions, or a small pop-up tent for enclosed comfort
- Weighted blankets or soft fur throws
- Dimmed or coloured lighting (e.g. fairy lights or a lava lamp)
- Visual sensory tools like slow-moving water toys or bubble timers
- Gentle, calming music or nature sounds (if accessible)
- Familiar scents such as a blanket from home, or fabric lightly sprayed with a safe, calming scent like lavender

Remember, the den is not a reward or punishment—it's a proactive strategy to support regulation, connection, and co-regulation. Its success lies in consistency, respect, and helping the child feel safe and seen.





WEBSITES

LINKS & RESOURCES

Recommendations

[Rotherham Local Offer](#) - information and advice on sensory needs

[Rotherham Virtual School](#): Host training events and offer support and advice for children looked after

<https://sensoryladders.org/> - Free online training for using sensory ladders as a sensory regulation tool

<https://sendcorotherham.co.uk/sensory-needs/> - Rotherham SEND website. Practical ideas and strategies to support sensory needs.

[NHS Glasgow Sensory website](#). Lots of information, videos and advice to support sensory challenges

<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/> - Fantastic website full of therapeutic resources and advice.

www.sensorypie.com - Sensory & Trauma-informed consultation, school training, and resources

www.creativetherapies.com - Seminars, workshops and resources on Sensory & Trauma by Marti Smith

<https://www.sensoryintegrationeducation.com/collections> - Sensory training and workshops

[Kelly Mahler's Interoception website](#) - All things interoception

[Mental Health Support For Young People | YoungMinds](#) - This is a useful site - with links for parents/professionals and also young people

[Mental Health And Wellbeing | Anna Freud](#) - Full of resources and toolkits for supporting children

[Blob Shop - Home of the Blob Tree Communication Tools. - blobshop](#) - useful resources to explore sense of self and feelings in different situations - includes a huge range of emotions - no words, just visuals useful for opening up conversations and exploring viewpoints

[Dr Margot Sunderland](#) - well respected child psychotherapist - lots of resources and books on her website : link to resources is here: [Books](#) - Margot Sunderland resources and books. Some examples are: Draw on Your Emotions, Routledge; 2nd edition (3 April 2018), Conversations That Matter, (2015) Worth Publishing, Using Storytelling as a Therapeutic Tool, (2003), Speechmark, and the range of therapeutic stories she has written (along with the resource packs) such as Teenie Weenie in a Too Big World, Willy and the Wobbly House, Ruby and the Rubbish Bin and The Frog Who Longed for the Moon to Smile. (Practical)



WEBSITES

LINKS & RESOURCES

Recommendations

[Rotherham - With Me In Mind](#) - Rotherham Mental Health in Schools Support Team

[Welcome to Rotherham CAMHS](#) - Rotherham CAMHS website

[NL-Emotion-regulation-e-leaflet-02.21.pdf](#)- emotional regulation pdf produced by RDashCamhs

[HOME | WhenTheAdultsChange](#)- Paul Dix website

[How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk by Adele Faber | Goodreads](#)- an oldie but a goodie - based on relational practice

[The Trauma and Attachment-Aware Classroom | Jessica Kingsley Publishers - UK](#)

[Emotion Coaching - United Kingdom](#)- emotion coaching website and [Microsoft Word - Parent EC](#)

[BrochureGeneric.docx](#) - a 'pocket guide\' available online

[The Zones of Regulation | A Curriculum For Emotional Regulation](#)

[THE INCREDIBLE 5-POINT SCALE - HOME](#)

[Therapeutic Stories - SEMH - Supporting Children and Young People](#) - use of metaphor to support children to talk or work through difficult feelings

[Starving the Anxiety Gremlin for Children Aged 5-9 | Jessica Kingsley Publishers - UK/](#)

[Starving the Anxiety Gremlin: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook on Anxiety Management for Young People by Kate Collins-Donnelly](#)

[Attachment and Trauma | The East Midlands Education Support Service](#) - Calmer Classrooms and talking too children about traumatic events

[Gathering Pupil Views | The East Midlands Education Support Service](#)- Mapping the Landscape and child views materials

[Understanding Behaviour in Schools | The East Midlands Education Support Service](#)- through a communication and trauma informed lens

[Identity | The East Midlands Education Support Service](#)- facilitates our thinking for building a child's cohesive and holistic sense of themselves



BOOKS

LINKS & RESOURCES

Recommendations

[Success with sensory supports](#) by Kim Griffin

[Building Sensorimotor Systems in Children with Developmental Trauma](#) - Sarah Lloyd

[Sensory Healing after Developmental Trauma](#) by Marti Smith

[Transforming Trauma in Children & Adolescents: An embodied approach to somatic regulation, trauma processing & attachment building'](#) (Warner, Wescot et al 2020)

[Sensory circuits: A sensory motor skills programme for children](#) by Jane Horwood

[Settling to learn](#) by Louise Michelle Bomber and Daniel A Hughes

[Interoception and Regulation](#) by Charlottle Brownlow

[The Scared Gang Series \[Box Set of 9 books\]](#) - The Scared Gang books by Éadaoin Bhreathnach, Occupational Therapist

[Our Stories | Piplo Productions](#) - Stories and ebooks for children who have had adverse experiences

[Teenagers and Attachment](#), (2009) edited by Andrea Perry, [The Worth Publishing Online Store](#) -

[Let's talk PANTS with Pantosaurus! | NSPCC](#) PANTS as an example of an accessible tool for teaching and having conversations about the most difficult of experiences

[A Simple Guide to Understanding Shame in Children](#), (2019) Betsy de Thierry, Jessica Kingsley Publishing

[Why Love Matters](#), (2010) Sue Gerhardt , Routledge (developmental understanding)

[Richie Who Cares?](#) (2022) Richie Barlow, Scratching Shed Publishing (building empathy- a autobiography)

[Know me to teach me: Differentiated discipline for those recovering from Adverse Childhood Experiences](#)

Paperback - 28 May 2020, by [Louise Michelle Bomber](#) (Author), [Andrea Perry](#) (Author, Editor)

[Inside I'm Hurting: Practical Strategies for Supporting Children with Attachment Difficulties in Schools](#)

Paperback - 4 Jun. 2007, by [Louise Bomber](#) (Author)