



Sensory Tools in the Classroom

STRATEGIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

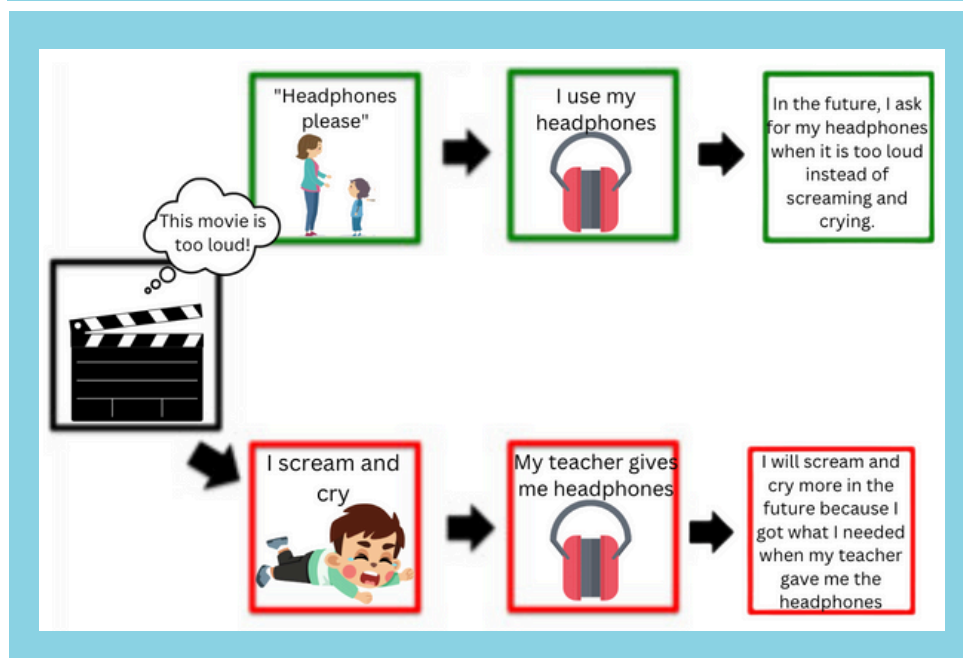
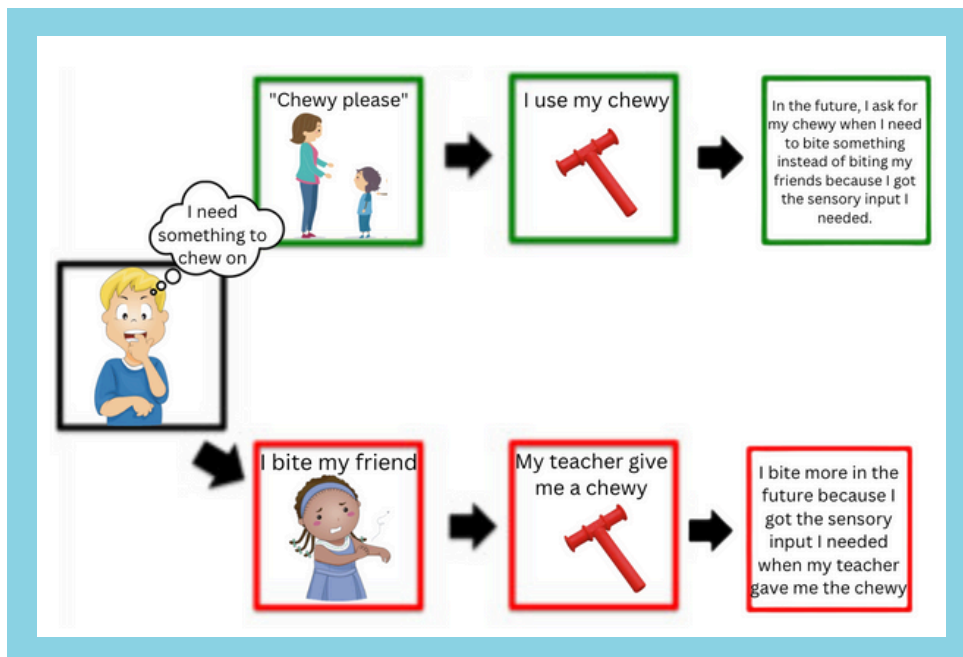
Strategies for students who have Sensory processing disorders may be beneficial for all of our learners. They may also be very similar to the strategies we use for students with ASD.

- Make sure his chair is a good fit for him. When he's sitting at his desk, he should be able to put his feet flat on the floor and rest his elbows on the desk.
- For the child who needs to move a bit, you might try an inflated seated cushion or a pillow from home so he can both squirm and stay in his seat.
- Some kids are better off if they sit close to the teacher. However, if your child is easily distracted by noise, he may end up turning around often to where the noise is coming from.
- If possible, eliminate buzzing and flickering fluorescent lighting. Use blue light covers to filter the light.
- Make sure he's not sitting next to distracting sources of noise.
- Teach personal space and appropriate behaviors when close to other people, how close is too close, ect.
- Teach student to request sensory breaks, offer choice board showing the different available options such as walking in circles, mini-trampoline, sour candy as a replacement behavior for touching/bumping into others that provides the same input.
- Allow for fidgets and chewable items, available in OT catalogues or amazon, a replacement behavior for biting, chewing on class items that also provides the input they are seeking
- Have the OT work with him on both gross and fine motor skills so he's more confident, whether he's in gym class or taking notes
- To avoid crying, stoping, and eloping in loud or aversive situations such as , assemblies, or allow the student to sit near a door and remind them they can ask for a break in the hallway or provide them with headphones.
- If the cafeteria is too stimulating, see about having him and one or more lunch buddies eat in a quieter room with a teacher or aide, allow them to use headphones.
- Have a clear visual schedule posted with plenty of preparation for transitions. Utilize timers. Teach student to set timers for themselves
- Schedule in sensory activities in the student's day. ex motor lab, sensory bins, sensory centers/rotations, movement breaks, ect.

ADVOCATE-TEACH THE LEARNER AND SET EXPECTATIONS

As with all of our learners, we want them to be their own advocate and be able to request what their bodies are needing. When we see our students are dysregulated and struggling, we can label those behaviors and model an appropriate response for them. It is important that we are not just throwing interventions at our students without teaching them to request it so they can generalize it to other situations with people who do not know what they need. We could inadvertently be reinforcing their behavior if the interaction looks something like these two different examples.

It is also a great idea to be proactive when setting expectations on sensory tools, flexible seating, ect. For example, a student who needs movement while sitting can request a yoga ball chair during work times. The expectation is that they keep the chair in one spot, no rolling, and they keep their bottoms on the chair while wiggling and slightly bouncing. If they get crazy with it, and their bottoms are flying in the air, they will get one warning and have to pick a different seat.



- Examples of how to teach the learner:
 - Behavior: Student is covering their ears and screaming "STOP! STOP! STOP!" because another student is tapping their pencil.
 - Teacher's response: "Oh, I see you are covering your ears and saying stop. Bobby is tapping his pencil, that can be really annoying. You can ask Bobby nicely to stop or raise your hand and ask to go get your headphones.
 - Student says "Bobby Please Stop" and the teacher reinforces both students with positive praise.
- Example how to teach the learner:
 - Behavior: Student is slinging their body around and bumping into everyone.
 - Teacher's response: I see you are bumping into your friends. That is not safe. You can ask for a squeeze, trampoline, or yoga ball squish. ("You can say "Squeeze")
 - Student requests "I want Squeeze" and teacher gives him a tight squeeze.

1. Teach student to identify how they are feeling. (Teacher: "Oh my! This movie is too loud.")
2. Teach student to pick an activity from available options you provide. (Teacher: "When something is too loud you can ask for your headphones, or ask the teacher to turn it down")
3. Teach student to request an activity for the input they are needing (Teacher: You can say "Ms. Lauren, Can you turn it down")
4. Reinforce their request by allowing them to do the activity (Teacher: "Yes, Sally! Thank you for asking")
5. Teach tolerance/delayed reinforcement as needed (Student requesting candy over and over. ect) ("One second Sally!" or "This is not too loud for your friends. If it is too loud for you, you can get headphones")

SOME OF OUR FAV SENSORY TOOLS

Remember to keep them age appropriate and teach your learner to identify what they need and to request it. Click on the picture to go to the websites.



CHEWELRY



SEAT CUSHIONS



FIDGET BANDS FOR CHAIRS



HAND FIDGETS



GET
CONNECTED!



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