

## Sensory Strategies

### Classroom Accommodations Checklist

#### Calming Strategies:

- Use natural lighting whenever possible, try to avoid fluorescent lights
- Allow the use of stress balls or fidget toys while listening or doing seat work
- Avoid rushing the child
- Allow frequent position changes including laying or sitting on the floor during certain tasks
- Provide “heavy work” chores when child appears to be escalating. For example, have child carry a milk crate full of books to the library – this allows a “time out” while providing calming deep pressure input
- Play classical music during seat work times
- Allow child to wear headphones if bothered or distracted by background noises
- Refer frequently to the schedule so child can mentally prepare for what comes next and look forward to sensory breaks
- Provide a “time in” area such as a small tent with pillows or beanbag inside

#### Strategies to improve focus:

- Keep a metronome on in the classroom to give the brain something rhythmic to assist with concentration
- Encourage child to keep a water bottle (the kind with a straw is optimum) at desk
- Allow snacking during seat work
- Allow gum-chewing or sucking on mints while listening or working
- Minimize visual distractions in the classroom – consider limiting curtains/décor to one or two colors, keep walls free of posters/signs, etc.
- Use alternative seating equipment such as therapy balls, t-stools, move ‘n sit discs, and air wedges
- Provide frequent movement breaks such as standing to do one or two yoga poses, a two-minute stretch break, wall push-ups, or action songs
- In circle time, provide defined boundaries, such as carpet squares for each child
- Provide weighted lap pads during circle time or seat work (these can be made easily – sew fabric into a rectangular pillow shape and fill with dry beans)

#### General Sensory Strategies:

- Establish eye contact before stating directions
- Encourage child to repeat directions back to you to demonstrate understanding and reinforce what is expected
- Provide a study carrel or a quiet corner to allow child to complete difficult tasks
- Make sure schedule allows opportunities for recess, P.E., or longer duration movement breaks (>10 minutes) at least every 90 minutes for younger kids and every 2 hours for older kids