

Occupational Therapy Advice Sheet - Sensory Diets

Some children find it difficult to stay at a focused activity for very long and would benefit from a sensory diet. "Sensory diet" is a term used to describe the school day being divided into a routine created especially for that child. The routine is divided into short activities (the length of time determined by the child's concentration span) and the activities alternate between physical activities and short, focused work times. An example of a sensory diet has been attached below.

Sensory diet for Adam



- 9.00:** Free play time (Adam arrives at the setting with lots of excess energy. He is free to run as much as he needs. During the last 5 minutes, he comes into his base room alone for some wind-down time. There is soft music, the lights are dimmed, and he has a deep-pressure massage).
- 9.20:** Adam sits at a table with his key person/ support worker to do a choosing activity.
- 9.30:** Circle time and story. Adam is given tasks during the story (such as fetching the book, getting up to turn the pages) so that he does not have to sit for longer than 10 minutes at a time.
- 10.00:** Adam goes into the corridor with his key person/ support worker to for active play (playing with a ball or throwing bean-bags into a hoop).
- 10.15:** Snack time. Adam sits at a table in the room for snack (which he chooses using PECS).
- 10.30:** Adam stands up and does some stretches before sitting at the table for a focused task.
- 10.45:** Adam is given helper tasks in the room (e.g. putting books away).
- 11.00:** Outdoor playtime (opportunities to run, jump and climb)
- 11.30:** Focused task at the table.
- 11.45:** Using the computer.
- 12.00:** Active play (e.g. playing ball in the hall or jumping on a trampoline/trampette).
- 12.30:** Lunch time. Adam sits at a table for lunch. If he finishes early, he is given lots of helper tasks to keep him busy until lunch time is over.
- 1.00:** Intensive interactions (one-to-one with his key person/ support worker).

- 1.20: Adam joins the rest of the children for the last 10 minutes of circle time.
- 1.30: Room art activity
- 2.00: Focused task to complete.
- 2.15: Free play outside (Adam can climb on the playground equipment, run and jump).
- 2.45: Circle time with his peers
- 3.00: Home time



If you wish to discuss these strategies or would like further advice, please contact Early Years Inclusion Team on 020 8921 3311.