

Welcome to this newsletter from Southwark's Autism Support Team. During this time of school closures, we are all still available to offer our support to parents/carers and educational staff.

We have a telephone support service from Monday – Friday, 9am-5pm.

More information can be found: [here](#).

Training

We are in the process of adapting our training so we can bring it to you as an online option.

If you wish to register your interest or find out more about any of the below courses please

email: AutismSupportTeam@southwark.gov.uk

- **Cygnets**
- **Next Steps**
- **Toileting workshop**

Games Corner

Each week we provide simplified instructions to a game you might have, or like to try at home. This week it is Snakes and Ladders.

Instruction sheet can be found [here](#)

Extra tips, links and ideas for parents [here](#)

Visual supports

Help teach learning to wait [here](#), to support learning to take turns [here](#).

Social Stories to support losing a game

These stories are at different levels, choose the one that is right for your child.

It's OK to Lose 1 [here](#)

It's Ok to Lose 2 [here](#)

It's Ok to Lose 3 [here](#)



Question Corner...

Q: My child climbs and jumps off of the sofa and other items of furniture. How can I stop them from jumping?

A: *It is important to understand **why** they are jumping to help try and reduce the behaviour.*

Things to think about:

- *Does the climbing/jumping happen all the time?*
- *Or when there is change to the routine? Some one unfamiliar is in the home?*
- *Have you asked the child to do something? Is there a demand to follow adult instruction?*

Asking questions like these will help understand why they might jump and climb.

*Sometimes with sensory processing, children find a way to satisfy the sensory input they are seeking, though it is not always the safest or most effective way. Rather than try and stop the behaviour, try and replicate the sensory input in a more safer way. **Remember:** your child has learnt a way to satisfy that sensory input; unless we provide an alternative, they will continue to climb and jump on the furniture.*

[Here](#) is a video from a child's point of view about sensory input.

To be added to our newsletter mailing list or to contact the team with a question/request for a forthcoming newsletter please contact us on:

AutismSupportTeam@southwark.gov.uk

Clicking on links in this document take you to google drive where the resources can be downloaded. If you would like us to email you any of the resources, use the email above.

Sensory Processing

Many people with autism experience some sort of difference in the way they process the sensory information around them. A person might be **over** or **under** sensitive to sensory information and they can experience being over or under at the same time, as well as separately.

The 7 main senses are:

1. Noise (**auditory**)
2. Touch (**tactile**)
3. Smell (**olfactory**)
4. Taste (**gustatory**)
5. Vision (**visual**)
6. Movement and balance (**vestibular**)
7. Where our body is in space (**proprioception**)



Sensory differences can have a huge impact on the ability to carry out daily skills in play and learning, as well as affect a person's behaviour. These differences may result in a child **seeking** more sensory input because they are **under** sensitive or if a child is **avoiding** sensory input, then the child may be **over** sensitive and so you may see defensive, avoidant behaviours or meltdowns.

Many people will be able to identify their own differences with the first 5 senses listed; depending on whether you prefer or avoid certain sounds, smells, flavours or sights. However, the vestibular and proprioception senses are typically less spoken about and so may be difficult to identify. [Here](#) is a handout that explains a little more about these senses.

It is not always obvious why someone is experiencing a sensory overload, so we have to try and work out **why** they react to certain situations. [Here](#) is a parent who noticed a change in his son's behaviour. You may also find this detailed sensory handout [here](#), useful in learning about your children's sensory profile. Visuals to support someone to choose sensory activities are [here](#)

Super Sensory Seven



Here are some fun sensory activities to try at home:

Noise (auditory) Have a singing session, write out /download lyrics and make it karaoke! You could use pots and pans and household items to make a house band! (You could add your own dance routine or learn one to go with it from YouTube!)

Touch (tactile) Freeze different items/toys in ice and allow the child to explore as it melts. Create a dry play box and add in items, such as vehicles, animals, letters.

Smell (olfactory) Play a smelling game where you encourage the child to smell and guess the scent, or indicate if they like or don't like with thumbs up / thumbs down. Use jars/ tubs and conceal the items, inside. Use scents such as lemons, ginger, fresh herbs, spices, grass, etc.

Taste (gustatory) Make a smoothie and have a taste test to see which combinations taste good.

Vision (visual) Play eye spy in the home. Draw a set of shapes on paper and go finding items that match the shapes. Use toilet rolls to make binoculars.

Movement and balance (vestibular) Take part in a yoga or movement session, [here](#) is a link to Cosmic Yoga, [here](#) are links to Joe Wick's sessions on YouTube. Set up a home obstacle course.

Where our body is in space (proprioception) Give your child a massage, this could be their hands, feet or body.

Sensory Circuits

Some schools may already be using sensory circuits as part of their daily routine.

A sensory circuit is made up of 3 stages:

Alerting

- Jumping, bunny hops, star jumps, hopping, bouncing on a yoga/peanut ball etc.

Organising

- Throwing balls into a target, shape sorters, crawling through a tunnel, Simon Says, posting objects, DIY balance beam with tape!



Calming

- Head, foot, hand or body massage: should be slow and steady; a deep pressure hug, or using a weighted blanket.

For further information on sensory circuits, have a look at this [handout](#) by Drumbeat School and for more ideas have a look at this [handout](#) from the NHS.