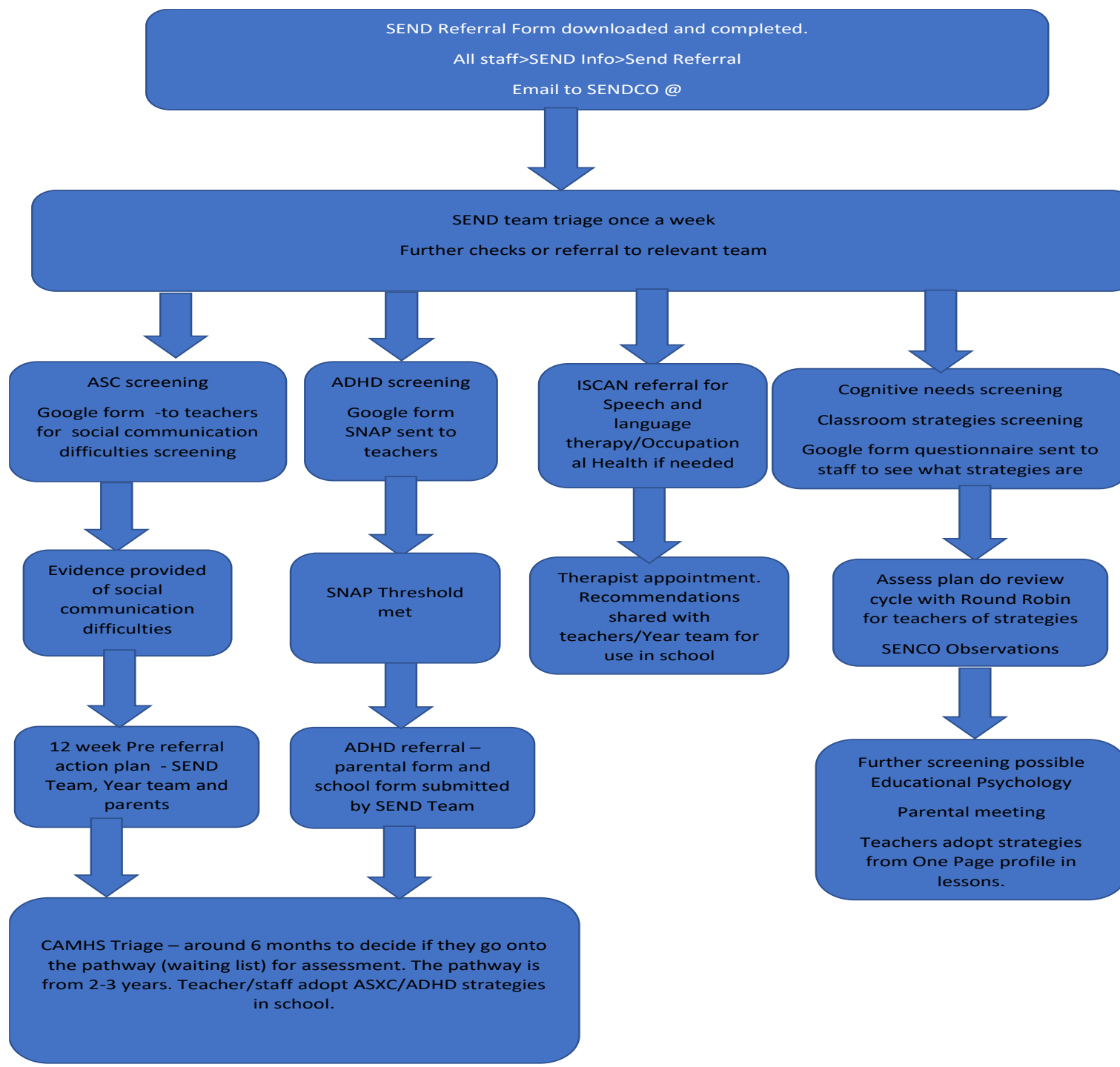


SEND Parents forum

Referral processes in school and who can help

Autism and sensory needs – how to support children's needs



Tameside ASC

- <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/autism/serviceforchildren#MAAT%20Pathway>

Our Kids Eyes

- For information on where your child is on the pathway

An illustration of a clown with red hair and a blue outfit, holding a pink balloon, interacting with a group of diverse children in a park. One child is in a wheelchair. The scene is set with stylized trees and a bright sun. In the top left corner, there is a logo for 'The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service' featuring a crown. In the top right, the 'oke' logo is displayed with a sun icon.

The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

oke

A BRIGHTER FUTURE THROUGH

OUR KIDS EYES

Offering support, information and activities to
families who have children with special needs/disabilities.

0161 342 5550

www.OURKIDSEYES.org

NeuroHub

- Zink HQ, Clough Street, Buxton SK17 6LJ
- neurohub@zink.org.uk
- 07498892525
- 01298214926
- Help with signposting to services
- Parent support
- Supporting age up to 25
- Help with PIP and DLA forms
- Free advice linked to neurodiversity
- Even if there is no formal diagnosis they will work with young people who are being referred.

Where to access support for SEND Issues Derbyshire

- Derbyshire DIASS - <https://www.derbyshireiass.co.uk/parents-and-carers/information-for-parents-and-carers.aspx>
- **You can use their advice line support for access to a trained support worker for immediate information and advice in relation to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including advice about:**
- Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP)
- personal budgets
- local and national policies, procedures and guidance
- the law relating to SEND.
- This support is available to both parent and carers as well as children and young people aged between the ages of 0 and 25.
- They can signpost you to other services and agencies who can also help you.
- They can also put you in touch with an independent supporter to help you as you go through the EHCP process.

The impact of the three areas of difference:



**Social understanding
and communication**



**Flexibility, information
processing, and understanding**

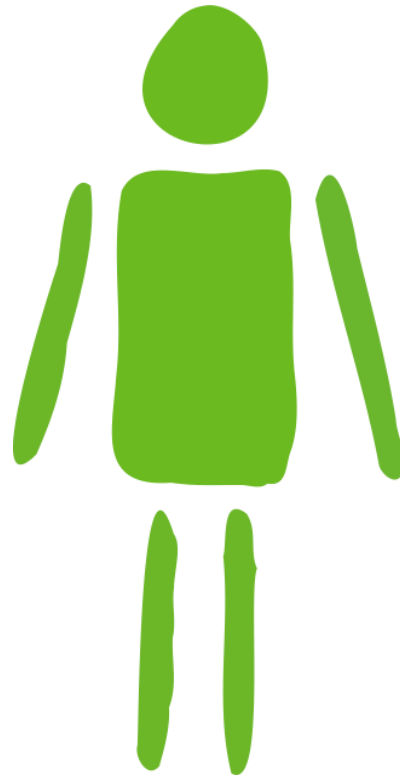


**Sensory processing
and integration**

We need to look at these differences in terms of both the strengths and support needs that might arise. We need to understand the impact of these differences on the pupil's levels of anxiety.

Understanding impact

To understand an autistic pupil, the following need to be considered...



The three areas of difference and the impact on the pupil

The pupil's strengths

Uneven development

Co-occurring conditions and differences

Making a referral for a diagnostic assessment

School staff are not in a position to diagnose autism.

We follow one of two referral pathways:

Through CAMHS or through Right To Choose.

Autistic pupils may have differences in how they:

- Perceive things
 - Plan
 - Understand concepts
 - Generalise their learning
 - Make predictions
 - Manage transitions.
-

Macro and micro transitions

- Moving from the **home to school**.
- Moving **between classrooms**.
- Moving **between activities** in the classroom.

How you can support transitions:

- **Prepare the pupil** for the transition – tell them and show them what will happen.
- Use **visual supports** (Now/Next, visual timetable, Social Story) to help them understand.
- Have **consistent routines** and **structure** in place.



Sensory processing and integration

We all process sensory information differently. Sensory processing and integration is the way that our bodies unconsciously take in information through our senses, and how this information is organised and made sense of in our brain. It attributes meaning to what is experienced, contributes to motor and behavioral outputs and is fundamental to how we learn and develop.

(Ayres, 1972)



Strengths



Excellent attention to detail

Very observant

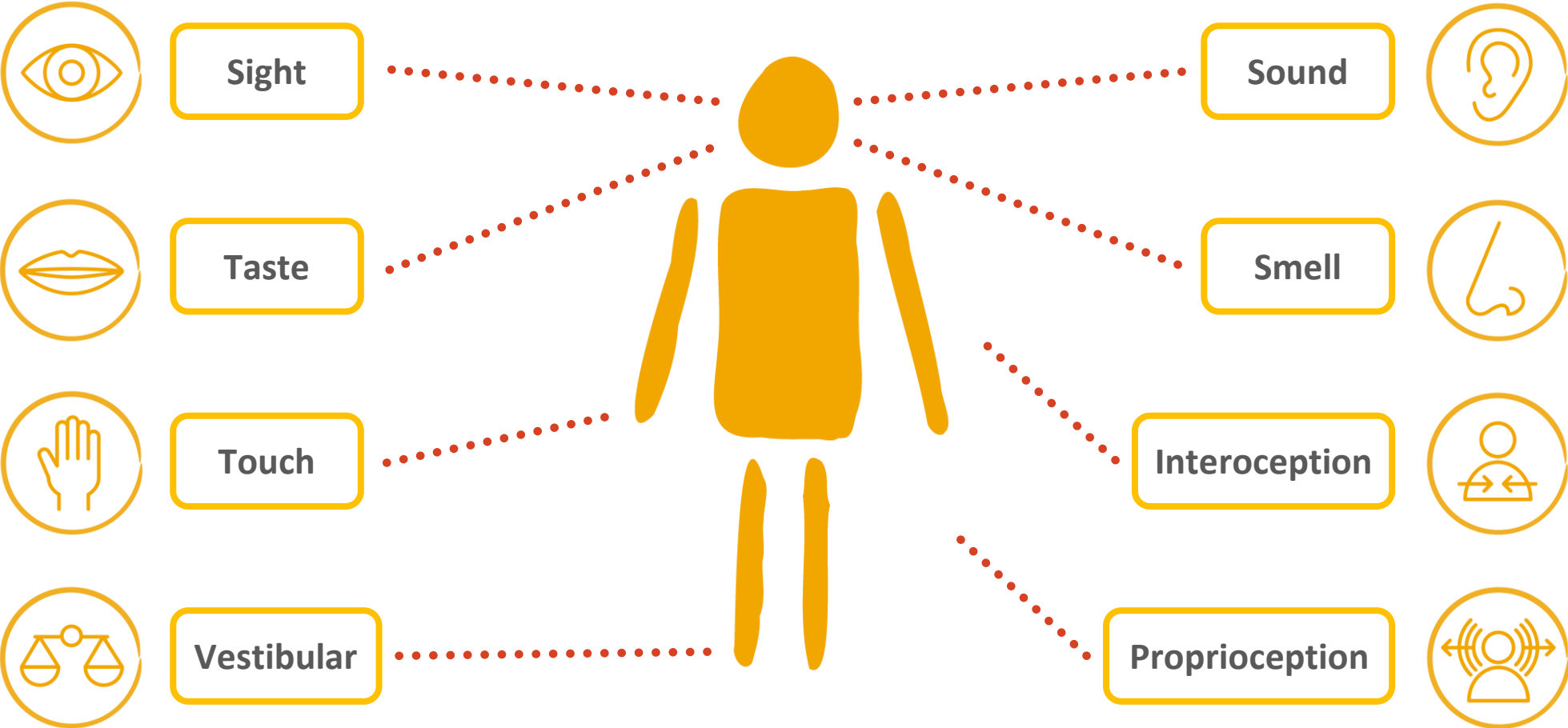
Able to attend to unique sounds

Able to detect subtle smells

Very attentive to taste experiences

Good at practical jobs and activities

The senses



The senses

Hyper (over) sensitive – children who are easily stimulated:

- Dislike of touch / texture experiences, e.g., physical contact
- Dislike of loud sudden noises
- Dislike of bright lights
- Avoidance of playground equipment (e.g. swings and slides)
- Avoidance of certain foods and food texture, colours, temperatures, etc.
- Dislike or avoidance of certain smells.

These outsized reactions may cause:

- A low pain threshold
- Clumsy, uncoordinated movements
- Withdrawal from activities
- Discomfort and confusion
- Fleeing without regard to safety
- Covering of eyes or ears frequently
- Picky food preferences

These children can be observed to be 'avoiding' activities and experiences. They will have trouble suppressing the information that they receive from everyday activities and may feel overloaded, which can cause distress (observed in their behaviour).

The senses

Hypo (under) sensitive – children who aren't so easily stimulated:

- Appear to have no fear or does not feel pain
- Seeks movement or touch opportunities (fidgets, rocks, jumps, leans on peers, runs around)
- Mouths or chews things
- Poor attention / unresponsive to the environment or people around them
- Distractible / over-excited
- Lack of energy

These reactions may cause:

- A high pain threshold
- Bumping into walls
- Touching things
- Putting things into their mouth
- Giving bear hugs
- Crashing into other people or things

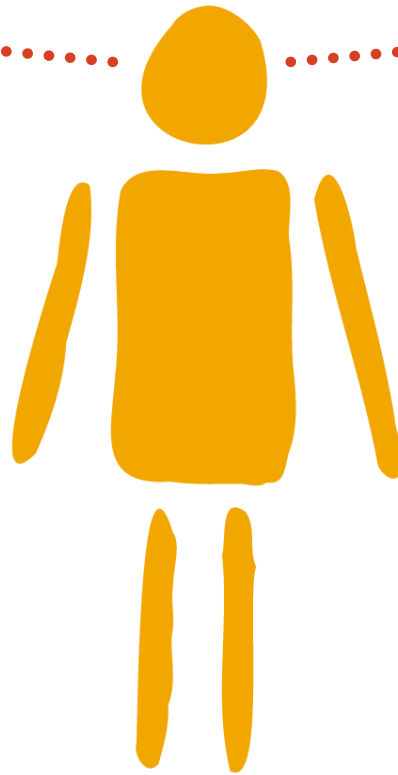
These children crave interaction with the world around them; they may interact and engage more with their surroundings to gain sensory feedback. This may make them appear hyperactive when they may simply be trying to make their senses more engaged. These children 'need' this feedback so that they can feel 'just right'. Alternatively, these children may lose focus and appear inattentive because they are not receiving enough input to sustain their involvement and engagement in activities and their environment. These difficulties may also be displayed through their behaviour.

The senses



Sight

Some pupils may be over-sensitive to particular colours, patterns or light. Others may be under-sensitive and therefore fail to see certain colours or transparent objects. Certain features (e.g. colours) may not be of interest to the pupil who therefore may not process this information. Some pupils may require visually defined spaces.



Sound



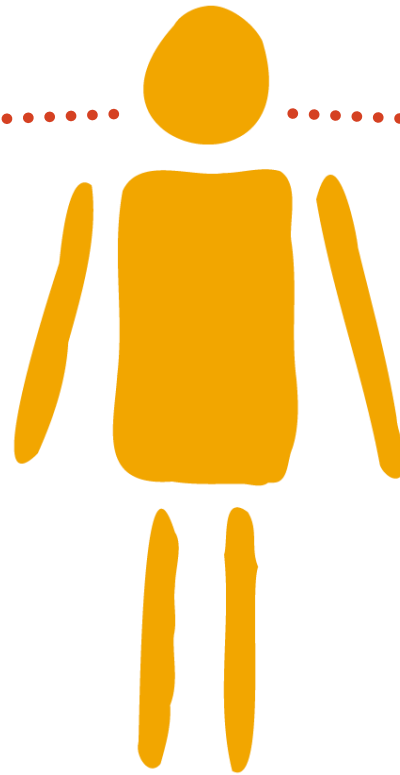
Some pupils find sounds painful and can have difficulty with two or more people talking at once. This over-sensitivity can make it difficult to screen out background noise. Other pupils may be under-sensitive to noise and find it difficult to process certain sounds.

The senses



Taste

Some pupils can be over-sensitive to the taste of certain foods and find some tastes very unpleasant. Others may be under-sensitive to taste and therefore enjoy eating highly flavoured food. Pupils may also experience difficulties with certain textures of food.



Smell



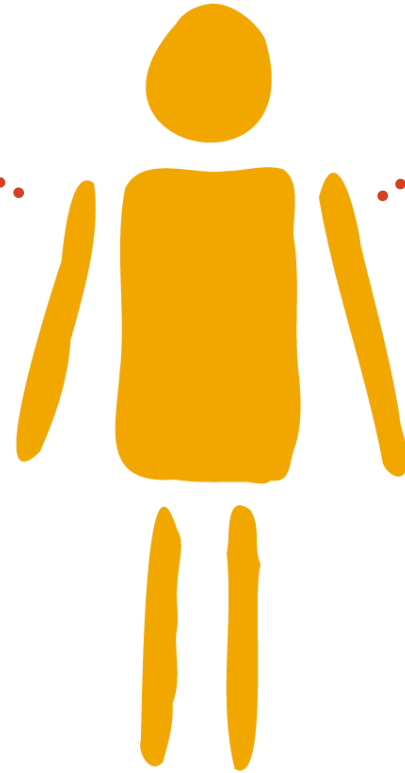
Some pupils may be over sensitive to certain smells. Others may not have a strong sense of smell and might lick objects or smear substances so that they can smell things better or to block out other sensations.

The senses



Touch

Pupils who are over-sensitive may dislike the touch of others or the feeling of particular clothing on their skin. Certain textures can cause distress. Other pupils might be under-sensitive and as a result may have a dangerously high tolerance for pain or discomfort.



Vestibular



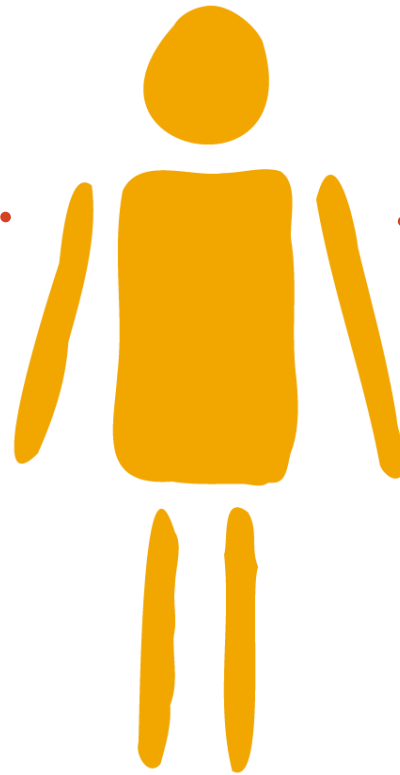
Some pupils might not keep balance easily and can have difficulties in certain environments, such as uneven or moving surfaces.

The senses



Interoception

Interoception is the ability to detect and attend to internal bodily sensations. It helps a pupil understand what is going on inside of the body like hunger, thirst, feeling hot or cold, fatigue, or a full bladder.



Proprioception



Many pupils have difficulty sensing where the body is in space and having a sense of where it starts and ends. This clearly presents problems when moving around and in doing activities which involve movement

Reducing sensory overload

For a study room at home - a **clearly organised environment** with **visual cues** and signs will help – revision or homework timetable using visuals for example – sessions planned out.

A low-arousal environment is a **relaxed and calm environment** that takes into account sensory processing and has **few distractions**. This means attending to **noise levels, colour schemes, and smells, and avoiding clutter**. Reducing posters and information on walls – eg plain wall behind a desk

Making sure that students are not using devices with blue light at least an hour before sleep.



Reducing sensory overload – adjusting the environment

You can **adjust the environment**, to reduce sensory overload:

- Organise the room to **minimise sensory experiences** that may be distracting or uncomfortable
 - Use **clear labels** and **visuals** around the room
 - Create a **safe place or quiet area** (or designate somewhere they can go)
 - Always consider the environment e.g. **noise, smells, proximity to others.**
 - Think about how smells such as **strong air fresheners may affect senses**
-

Reducing sensory overload – adjusting activities

You can **adjust activities to reduce sensory overload** in the following ways:

- Visual reinforcements such as **timers** to help them plan their session, visual timetables
 - **Frequent movement breaks** to allow students to have rests between pieces of work to maintain their focus
-

Video: How many questions can you answer?

This video demonstrates what it feels like to be overloaded with information.



<https://vimeo.com/776184116/648db3e9f4>

Video



Sensory difficulties your child has with school - how could we help?: