

Tools



One-Page Profile

What you can do to help me:	My name is: I am years old I communicate by:	What is important to me:
What people like and admire about me:	Me Click to add a photo here	My strengths & talents:
My dream is to:	My fears / worries / things I don't like:	My favourite things:

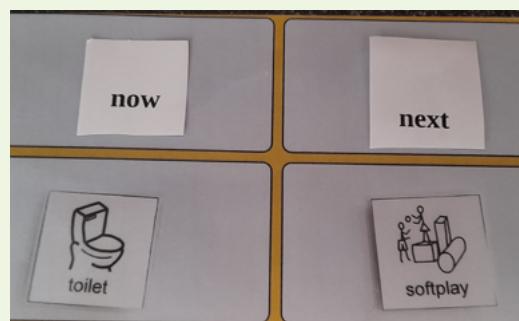
Examples of Visual Strategies

Examples of what visual strategies can be used for

1. Create daily/weekly schedules with visual blocks of time



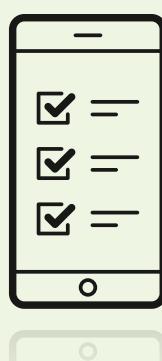
2. Show sequential steps in a task



3. Demonstrate units of time



4. Make a “to do” list



When I am feeling anxious I will:

Listen to music.

Move my body.

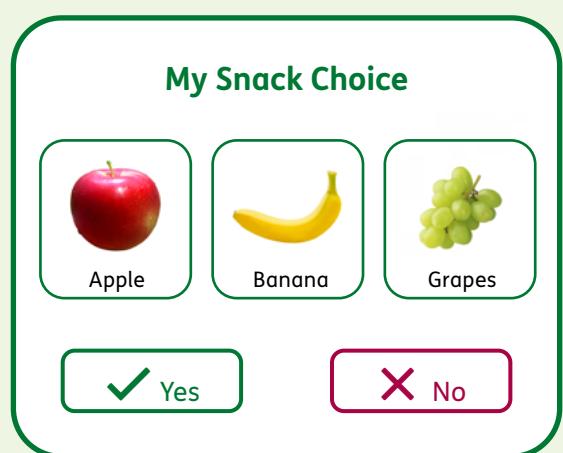
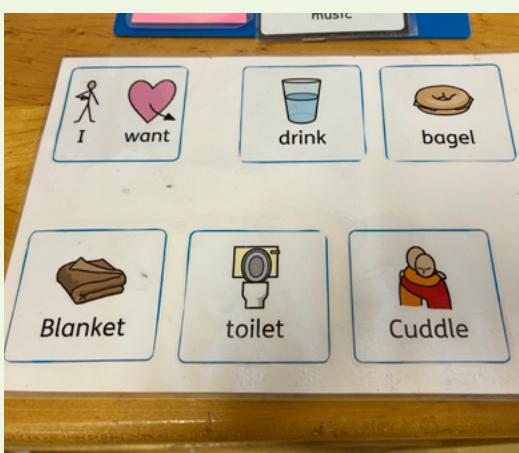
Take a moment out of class.

Examples of Visual Strategies

5. Aid communication for those who are less or non-verbal



6. Offer choices



“I’m a visual thinker, not a language-based thinker. My brain is like Google Images.” – Temple Grandin

Making Your Communication Clear Checklist

Checklist

Do you and your colleagues consistently	Reasonable adjustments made
Use the pupil's name to gain attention. (Do not expect that the pupil will always look at you.)	
Use simple, clear language.	
Say what you mean. Avoid jokes and sarcasm.	
Say things in the order that they are going to happen.	
Allow the pupil time to process information.	
Say the same words in the same order if you need to repeat an instruction.	
Use visual cues (symbols, photos, objects) to support your verbal information.	
Avoid non-verbal cues. The pupil may not be able to pick up on these.	

Top Tips for Working with Parents and Carers

1. Be sensitive to the needs of the parent or carer. Make sure you take some time to consider where they are on their journey.
2. Do not assume that you understand what they are going through.
3. Listen more than you speak. Believe what you are being told. You will be able to gather a great deal of information about the child or young person you are supporting.
4. Ensure the parent or carer feels respected and not judged.
5. Know the Code of Practice and the Equality Act. Some parents and carers have better knowledge of these than staff.
6. Work to enable everyone who has contact with the child or young person to fully understand their support needs. If the parent or carer feels this is not the case, they will soon lose confidence in you.
7. Don't promise things that you are unable to deliver, and manage expectations well.
8. Actively involve the parents or carers in all planning towards meeting the child or young person's support needs. This will take time but will pay dividends, not only with your relationship with the family, but in enabling you to meet the support needs of the child.
9. Focus on the child or young person's strengths and their areas for development. Make sure you are extending their strengths and areas of interest as well as supporting their areas of development. This will show the child and parents or carers that you are interested in all aspects of their wellbeing and learning.
10. Parents or carers may have had negative experiences in previous settings or when they were at school themselves. Build a relationship of trust to benefit the child or young person.
11. Work with the parent or carer to establish an effective communication system that works well for all parties. Communicate their child's positive experiences and progress as much as you can, as well as any areas where they may need support.
12. Think about the language you use and how you use it when talking to the parents / carers of neurodivergent children and young people.

Environmental Checklist

Classroom:

Date:

General classroom appearance

Are the furniture tops clear?	
Are cupboard doors closed?	
Are the blinds closed when the sun shines in?	
Are all cupboards and boxes labelled clearly?	
Are all resources stored in cupboards or lidded boxes?	

Organisation of room

Is there a clear area for group work?	
Is there a clear snack area (or a strategy which indicates change of use)?	
Are work areas clearly organised with resources clearly labelled so pupils can access the materials they need?	
Are materials/stationery in a good state of repair?	

Computer

Are wires hidden?	
Are stop/no touching signs in places for when the computer is not in use?	
Is the computer area clean and tidy?	

Sound

Are windows closed if people are outside?	
Do chairs have stoppers to minimise noise?	

Environmental Checklist

Staff	
Do staff consider clothing choices (remembering bright and highly patterned clothing may not conducive to learning)?	
Are accessories kept to a minimum?	
Do staff avoid wearing strong perfume or hair products?	
Do staff support understanding using symbols?	
Do staff use minimal language where appropriate?	
Are staff conversations kept to essential information only in the presence of pupils?	

Areas for development

Examples of Sensory Differences and Strategies

Examples of sensory differences

System	Examples of oversensitive behaviour	Examples of undersensitive behaviour
 Touch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Touch can be painful and uncomfortable and some children may withdraw from aspects of touch. This can have a profound effect on relationships. Only tolerates certain materials for clothing. Dislike of having anything on hands or feet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holds others tightly. Has high pain threshold (pain/temperature). Self harming. Enjoys heavy objects on top of them. Prefers tight clothing.
 Sight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distorted vision occurs, objects and bright lights can jump around. Fragmentation of images, as a consequence of too many sources of visual stimuli. Focussing on particular details (sand grains) can be more pleasurable than looking at something as a whole. Distracted by certain lighting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May see things darker, lose features and lines. May concentrate on peripheral vision as central vision is blurred. Conversely, some say that a main object is magnified and things on the periphery are blurred. Poor depth perceptions – problems with catching or throwing. Flapping near eyes.
 Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volume of noise can be magnified and surrounding sounds distorted and muddled. Inability to cut out particular sounds – difficulties concentrating. May have a lower hearing threshold which makes an individual particularly sensitive to auditory stimuli – hearing conversations in the distance. Fingers in ears. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not acknowledge particular sounds. Enjoys crowded noisy places. Bangs doors and objects. Makes own noise – for example, humming.
 Taste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some flavours and foods are too strong and overpowering. Certain textures also cause discomfort, some children will only eat smooth foods such as mashed potatoes or ice cream. Only eats bland foods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preference for strong flavours – like very spicy foods. Eats non-food items – for example, grass, soil, materials. This is known as pica.

Examples of Sensory Differences and Strategies

System	Examples of oversensitive behaviour	Examples of undersensitive behaviour
 Smell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aversion to particular smells. • Smells can be intensified and overpowering. • toileting problems. • Dislike of individuals with distinctive perfumes or shampoos. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smells objects. • May have no sense of smell and fail to notice extreme odours. • May lick objects.
 Sense of body in space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dislikes close proximity of others. • Has difficulty with fine motor skills and manipulating small objects. • Moves whole body to look at objects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity – stands too close to others not knowing about personal space etiquette. • Little awareness of hunger/pain/cold/ needing the toilet. • Difficulties with navigating rooms and avoiding objects (bumps into things). • Bumps into people. • Poor muscle tone. • A preference for deep pressure for example tight shoelaces or pushing their chin into people.
 Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dislikes playground equipment (swing/slide etc). • Difficulties in activities which include movement (sport). • Difficulties in stopping quickly or during an activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for rocking, spinning, swinging. • Seeks opportunities for movement/ constantly moving/fidgeting.
 Interoception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is overwhelmed by feelings that are part of the body's day-to-day functioning. • Becomes distracted by typical bodily functions – for example, the beating of their heart. • Finds it challenging to regulate their emotions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finds it challenging to identify when they are hungry/thirsty (goes long periods without eating/drinking). • Has toileting accidents. • Finds it challenging to identify their emotions or work out how they are feeling. • Is unable to recognise when they are ill – for example, sense they have a fever.

Examples of Sensory Differences and Strategies

Strategies for sensory differences

System	Oversensitivity	Undersensitivity
 Touch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warn the child if you are about to touch them. Remember hugs may be painful rather than comforting! Gradually introduce different textures. Allow individuals to complete activities themselves (for example, hair brushing and hand washing) to allow them to regulate their sensitivity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider whether there would be benefit to the child or young person wearing tight clothing – for example, leotards underneath outer clothing. Weighted blankets. Sleeping bags. Work with sand bag on lap.
 Sight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce fluorescent lighting. Permit the wearing of sunglasses. Create a workstation. Use blackout blinds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use resources which stimulate the visual system – for example, light sticks.
 Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shut windows and doors to reduce external sound. Prepare the child for noisy places. Offer ear plugs/ear defenders. Encourage the use of a personal stereo/iPod/similar. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Music therapy. Permit the use of a personal stereo. Use visual cues to back up verbal information.
 Taste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow opportunities to taste lots of different things to aid sense development. Encourage children to “clean out” mouth with water between mouthfuls. Puree foods. Use ice pops to desensitise mouth. Introduce very small bites of portions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow opportunities to taste lots of different things to aid sense development. Provide oral stimulation throughout the day, crunchy foods. Use vibration toys to stimulate the senses.

Examples of Sensory Differences and Strategies

System	Oversensitivity	Undersensitivity
 Smell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use unscented detergents or shampoos. • Refrain from wearing perfume. • Make environment as fragrance free as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use strong smelling objects as rewards. • Use strong smelling objects to distract from inappropriate strong smells (faeces) – for example, scented playdough. • Create a book of scents – for example, match pictures to scented cotton wool, lemon, coffee, etc.
 Sense of body in space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threading activities. • Lace boards. • Allow the child to stand at end of line when lining up. • Allow the child to sit on a stool instead of carpet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position furniture around the edge of the room to make navigation easier. • Put coloured tape on floor to indicate boundaries. • Use the arm's length rule (you must be at least an arm's length away from someone when speaking to them).
 Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break down activities into small steps. • Use visual clues for finish lines or stops in movement activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage activities which develop the vestibular system – for example, swing, roundabout, rocking horse, see-saw, dancing, etc.
 Interoception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grounding activities that draw attention to specific body parts. • Use music/ear phones/calmers to block out internal noises. • Teach emotions and incorporate emotional check ins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetable regular opportunities to eat/drink. • Timetable toilet breaks. • Provide a toilet pass to avoid having to ask at the last minute. • Support identifying and understanding emotions and incorporate emotional check ins.



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