

Introduction to Sensory Circuits:

The Sensory Circuits is a programme written for teachers by Jane Horwood (2009), an Occupational Therapist. It is an approach that has been adopted in the Koala Club Nurture provision in order to support pupils to get ready for learning. Initially the programme was led by an adult but as the pupils within the group have become more confident in working through the activities they have taken it in turns to lead the different activities.

Aims of Sensory Circuits:

- The aim is to impact on sensory motor development within a school setting.
- It is a series of activities designed to help children become more focused and calm - ready for learning.
- Short bursts of activities switches on and engages the child's sensory systems.
- Long term aim is to improve the children's ability to process and regulate their responses to sensory information.
- On a day to day basis the aim is to alert, organize and calm children ready to engage in school activities.

Objectives of Sensory Circuits:

- Helps to focus children in readiness for classroom activities.
- Fun for both children and staff.
- Helps to calm some children and alert others.
- Increases attention in the classroom.
- Supports confidence to move.
- Increases self-worth and esteem.
- Reduces negative behaviours.

Planning:

- Before commencing Sensory Circuits your school should complete environmental and individual risk assessments - A template for these risk assessments can be found within the Horwood's Sensory Circuits book.
- The book has templates for a variety of forms to aid development of this programme in school.
- Prior to starting it is important that the facilitator has some background on the pupils in the session.
- The focus child should have clear targets prior to starting. Recording of the session should be in line with these targets.
- Resources should be made / organised in advance of the sessions starting.
- It is important that all adults working with the pupils know what the resources are for and how to use them. This is also important to be consistent.

Sensory Circuit Formula:

- Group or individual.
- Choose 2 or more activities from each section – Alerting, Organising and Calming.
- Each task is 45 seconds – 2 minutes.
- Whole programme should take no longer than 15-20 minutes each day.
- Ideally completed at the start of the school day and in the afternoon before learning commences.

Alerting

Jumping
Running
Jumping Jacks
Fresh Air
Spinning
Dancing

Wakes my body up

Organising

Simon Says
Wall pushes with hands and feet
Passing “heavy” objects
Obstacle Course
Resistance bands
Crawling

Organises my body

Calming

Koala Self Hug
Koala Palm Presses
Lying under a blanket
“Heavy Work” – Moving Furniture
Arm Massage
Calming Music

Calms my body



Koalas – Get ready for learning!

Always start with removal of shoes and socks, as this increases tactile awareness.

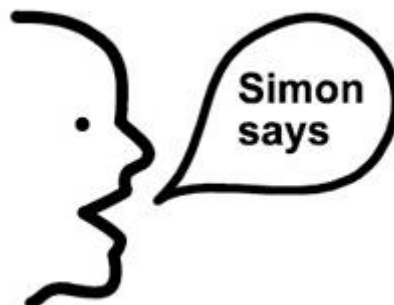
Koala alerting activities:

Jumping – Use the non-slip spots as a prompt, to aid jumping. Jump from spot to spot. Jump for 10 jumps.



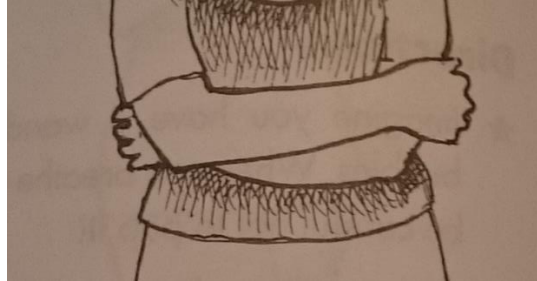
Koala organising activities:

Simon Says – Every member of the group has the chance to say “Simon Says...”. Play “Simon Says” two times.

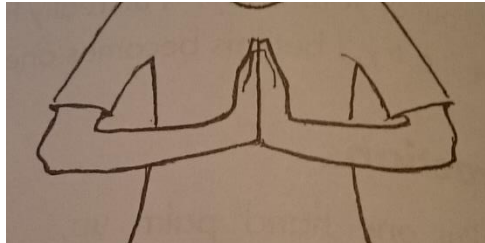


Koala calming activities:

Koala Self-Hug – Cross your arms in front of you, far enough to bring your palms almost to your sides. Squeeze your arms or sides firmly, and hold for five to ten seconds.



Koala Palm Presses – Face your palms together. Push them firmly together, and hold this position for five to ten seconds.



Finish with putting on socks and shoes. Individual aspects of this programme can be used in isolation throughout the session.

References:

Bean Bag Clip Art- <http://weclipart.com/gimg/4BB87E0D6A3CB439/bean-bag-toss-clip-art-stickler-man-tossing-a-bag-1gWPJm-clipart.jpg> (Accessed: 24/11/17).

Brukner, L. (2014) – The Kid's Guide to Staying Awesome and In Control.

Dodd, D., & Clutterbuck, L., & Lemar, M. (2017). "Supporting a Child with Sensory Differences in School – Is it Sensory, is it behaviour or both?". The Beacon Folkestone. Training 2017.

Horwood, J. (2009). "Sensory Circuits: A Sensory Motor Skills Programme for Children". LDA: London.

Spot to Spot - https://www.google.co.uk/search?biw=1680&bih=955&tbn=isch&sa=1&ei=1CMYWqOjClula8e-mJgH&q=brainworks+spot+to+spot&oq=brainworks+spot+to+spot&gs_l=psy-ab.3...8893.12804.0.13040.21.19.2.0.0.117.1179.16j3.19.0....0...1c.1.64.psy-ab.0.1.63...0i24k1j0i10i24k1.0.DvcixGFAD9E#imgsrc=uK8o9stllvMSM:&spf=1511531490063 (Accessed: 24/11/17).