

Early Years & Primary Sensory Curriculum

Spring 1 2026

<u>Engagement Scales</u>	<u>Staff Role</u>	<u>Motivation</u>	<u>Repetition and Variation</u>	<u>Language</u>
<p>1. Rejection: The learner is present in the session, but only because they have to be. There is an active rejection of another person’s presence in their social space.</p> <p>2. Encounter: The learner is present in the session without any obvious awareness of its progression. It is sufficient that there is a willingness to tolerate a shared social atmosphere.</p> <p>3. Awareness: The learner appears to notice, or fleetingly focus on an object, person or event involved in the session. On the whole however, there is still self-absorption.</p> <p>4. Attention and Response: The learner begins to respond, though not consistently, to what is happening in a session, by for example, showing signs of surprise or enjoyment.</p> <p>5. Engagement: The learner gives sustained and consistent attention to the supporting adult by for example, looking, listening, following events with their eyes etc.</p> <p>6. Participation: The learner is fully involved in the session for the whole period and occasionally but not consistently, actively responds to the adult's lead. They may show enjoyment of the process through smiles and laughter.</p> <p>7. Learner Initiation: The learner is fully involved in the session for the whole period and is clearly aware of what is expected. They may well follow some of the sequences of the music and actions and will consistently offer as much pro-active movement as she physically can.</p> <p>8. Imitation: The learner is fully involved in the interaction for the whole period though they may still be accepting physical support. The learner will however, show clear signs of anticipation and an eagerness to fulfil all or part of the movements independently.</p> <p>*Some children within the group are assessed using The Engagement Model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General calmness • Sensitivity in relation to vulnerabilities and nurturing needs. • Strong emphasis on routines, with regular provision of information about what would be next, especially when that veered from routine. • Careful modulation of the degree of direction given, responding to the child’s need for balance between clarity and choice. • Anticipation of specific needs, in respect of health, safety and comfort. • Creating and responding to opportunities for fun, pleasure and enjoyment. • Affirmation and associated engendering of children’s sense of their own achievements; • Sharing in the experiences of children and young people. • Openness to opportunities, and having the courage to allow activities to develop without necessarily knowing how they will unfold; • Total engagement with children and young people in their activities. • Sensitivity to the preferences of children and young people. (Crombie et al, 2014, p13, original emphasis) 	<p>What is that interests, moves, excites, engages your individual learners?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having the desire to communicate with another person is not always obvious in some learners and the challenge is for staff to find out what motivates learners to want to communicate. Remember that motivations can often change over time, so try everything at least 10 times before you discard it as not motivational. • What is particularly important here is who interests, moves, excites, engages your individual learners? • Set up a means of communication that allows the learner to engage with their favourite person (or people) whenever they want to? If learners are motivated by people, this is a fantastic way to establish cause and effect (contingency responding and contingency awareness) Once cause and effect is established you may then pull back on the immediate satisfaction of the demand. 	<p>Whilst there is always room for creativity, we need to keep in mind that for someone with communication needs the most important element to their education is repetition. These learners will probably have to repeat something hundreds or even thousands of times before it is remembered and we, therefore, have to be mindful to not give the learner too much variation.</p> <p>If following a rolling cycle of ‘learning opportunities’ or when thinking about age-appropriate sessions, we might want to offer the learners opportunities for variation. We must be sure however that this ‘breadth’ doesn’t become tokenistic and meaningless to the learner.</p> <p>If a particular learner gains a lot of enjoyment from a familiar story, nursery rhyme or activity and can anticipate, participate, communicate preferences and make requests during the session, do not end the activity just because he/she has been exposed to it for too many years or because we feel that it is not age appropriate.</p>	<p>Language is an enormously powerful tool.</p> <p>When it is used thoughtlessly, language can dominate and exclude those who do not have it or do not have access to it. It then stops becoming a communicative tool and becomes instead, a significant barrier to learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must use language carefully; • We must use language that is appropriate to the situation and the learner; • We must use language repetitively so that learners have many opportunities to understand meanings in real and concrete ways. • Reminding each other not to talk unless it’s in relation to the lesson.

Core Areas of Learning & Development

My Communication	My Physical	My Social and Emotional Development	My Literacy	My Maths
EYFS: Communication & Language SEND code: Communication and Interaction	EYFS: Physical Development SEND code: Physical & Sensory	EYFS: Personal, Social & Emotional Development SEND code: Social, Emotional and Mental Health	EYFS: Literacy SEND code: Cognition & Learning	EYFS: Maths SEND code: Cognition & Learning
<p>Attention Autism: Stage 1- The Bucket to focus attention Stage 2- To build attention Stage 3- The interactive game to build turn taking. Stage 4- Independent</p> <p><i>Link Attention Autism session to Traditional Tales to develop vocabulary linked to the children’s topic.</i></p> <p>Sensory cookery: The ingredients should be introduced one by one. Items should be poured from a height. This should be a slow process allowing each learner to explore the individual ingredients before mixing and it is not necessary that the relative amounts are strictly adhered to because the important thing is that each learner has the opportunity and time to touch, taste, smell, play with, mix and feel the changes in texture.</p> <p>Week 1: Frozen yoghurt snowflakes Week 2: Edible Snowmen Week 3: Arctic Smoothies Week 4: Ice Cube Fruit Pops Week 5: Snowflake biscuits Week 6: Arctic Yoghurt Parfaits</p> <p>Food with Food: “Fun with Food” is a sensory-based learning approach that invites children to explore and interact with food in playful, pressure-free ways. It’s not about eating or nutrition lessons (although those can be gently encouraged too); it’s about curiosity, confidence, and discovery.</p> <p>Begin the session by singing the welcome song: <i>“It’s time for Fun with Food; it’s time for Fun with Food! Look, smell, touch, and play — it’s time for Fun with Food!”</i></p> <p>Start with a friendly hello and explain what the session is about. Introduce the food items you’ll be exploring in simple, clear language.</p>	<p>Sensory circuits: Sensory circuits are structured into three sequential phases, each grounded in principles of sensory processing and integration. These circuits are designed to help children regulate their physical and emotional states, preparing them for focused learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alerting Phase – This stage stimulates the vestibular system to awaken and energise the body. Activities may include skipping, bouncing on a trampette, jumping jacks, or engaging with a bouncing sphere. • Organising Phase – This segment focuses on promoting multi-sensory processing and enhancing balance and coordination. Children may climb, hop, balance on beams, or participate in throwing activities. • Calming Phase – The final stage helps children settle, allowing them to finish the circuit in a calm, centred state. Common activities include wall push-ups, crawling through tunnels, or using an exercise ball for deep pressure input. <p>Fine Motor:</p> <p>Hand Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll playdough into balls and squash flat with palms. • Use toy hammers or spoons to break frozen blocks containing small toys. • Scoop cotton wool or textured materials into buckets using large spoons or scoops. <p>Pinch Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clip paper shapes or cotton balls onto a string using clothespins. • Pinch and sort small felt pieces by colour or size into trays. • Pinch and thread mini pom-poms onto pipe cleaners to make garlands. <p>Wrist Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap yarn around cardboard shapes. 	<p>SCERTS: The SCERTS model supports children’s social and emotional development through a structured approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on helping children stay calm, alert, and engaged. • Uses sensory supports, visual cues, and adult co-regulation to develop self-regulation skills. • Builds resilience by teaching strategies to manage frustration, transitions, and unexpected changes. <p>PIC: The PIC model—Play, Interact, communicate—is a play-based approach designed to support young children’s social communication and interaction skills through structured, engaging activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes expressive and receptive language in natural, playful contexts. • Encourages children to use gestures, sounds, or words to express needs, feelings, and ideas. • Strengthens emotional literacy by labelling emotions and discussing experiences during play. <p>Small Steps Assessment: One of the strands of the Small Steps Assessment focuses on building competence in Social Communication and Emotional Regulation.</p> <p>Zones of regulation The Zones of Regulation is a visual framework that helps children recognise and manage emotions by grouping them into four color-coded zones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Zone – Sad, tired, or bored; low energy. • Green Zone – Calm, happy, and ready to learn. • Yellow Zone – Excited, silly, nervous, or frustrated; elevated emotions. • Red Zone – Angry, panicked, or out of control; intense feelings. <p>It supports emotional awareness and teaches strategies to self-regulate and return to a calm, focused state.</p> <p>Emotion Coaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the feeling – “You look sad.” • Show care – “That must feel really hard.” • Name it – “You’re feeling angry because your toy broke.” • Set a limit – “It’s okay to be angry, but we don’t throw.” • Help fix it – “Let’s see what we can do together.” • Play games with puppets etc. Puppet might feel sad, happy, angry, scared etc. 	<p>Sensory story: A well-structured sensory story should have a distinct beginning and ending, creating a clear narrative flow. To capture attention and set the tone, a simple drum rhythm repeated for two to three minutes can be an effective introduction. The story should engage and connect all learners, fostering inclusivity. Repetition is key throughout, reinforcing understanding and participation. Keep the pacing appropriate to maintain engagement, ensuring the story progresses smoothly. Utilize various forms of communication—Makaton, symbols, facial expressions, props, and actions—to make the experience accessible to all. Finally, provide plenty of opportunities for active participation, allowing learners to immerse themselves fully in the storytelling process.</p> <p>Start the session with a song https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ouL4ZMEdl then introduce sensory resources that engage touch, sound, smell, and sight. Encourage children to explore these materials, using the experience to support language development—adults can model associated sounds (e.g., the swish of grass). Conclude with a simple drum rhythm to bring the session to a close.</p> <p>Week 1 & 2: Who is Hiding in the Snow? Week 3 & 4: Don’t Tickle the Bear Week 5 and 6: Zoom to the Moon</p> <p>Word Aware Concepts: Week 1 & 2: “smooth” Week 3 & 4: “rough” Week 5 and 6: “dark”</p> <p>A range of opportunities for children to take part in big write using a range of different resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chunky crayons • Paint • Water • Chalk • Pencils 	<p>Sensory maths:</p> <p>Weeks 1 & 2: Who is Hiding in the Snow? Sensory Maths Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowball Scoop & Count: Children use spoons to scoop cotton balls or pom-poms into bowls and count how many they collected. • Button Counting for Snowmen: Give each child a snowman picture and a pot of buttons. Count and place the correct number of buttons on the snowman. • Snowflake Match: Provide large paper snowflakes with numbers written on them. Children place the matching number of pom-poms or beads on each snowflake. • Snowflake Shape Hunt: Hide paper snowflakes in different shapes (circle, triangle, square) in a sensory tray. Children find, name, and sort them. • Snowball Size Sort: Provide cotton balls and pom-poms in small, medium, and large sizes. Children group by size and compare which pile is biggest. <p>Weeks 3 & 4: Don’t Tickle the Bear Sensory Maths Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furry Shape Hunt: Hide foam shapes in a tray of faux fur and cotton wool. Children dig, feel, and sort by shape. • Animal Pattern Trail: Place textured animal cards (fur, feathers) in a snowy sensory tray for children to copy or extend AB/ABC patterns. • Heavy vs. Light Animal Weighing: Use a balance scale with sensory items—soft fur balls, feathers, and small animal toys. Children predict and compare which feels heavier or lighter. • Build an Igloo Wall: Use chunky blocks or textured bricks to create simple size or colour patterns while stacking. <p>Weeks 5 & 6: Zoom to the Moon Sensory Maths Ideas:</p>

<p>Model key vocabulary as you go — for example, "soft", "cold", "crunchy", "sweet".</p> <p>Guide the children through each sense one at a time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it <i>look</i> like? • How does it <i>smell</i>? • Can we <i>touch</i> it? • What does it <i>sound</i> like when we squish or crunch it? <p>ECAT- Every Childs A Talker</p> <p>Messy play:</p> <p>Winter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snow dough • Shaving foam snow with glitter • Ice cube trays with hidden objects <p>Bears</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mud tray with twigs and leaves • Faux fur and textured fabric sensory bin • Brown playdough • Bear paw prints with paint and sponges <p>Space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galaxy slime • Moon sand • Black tray with flour for “stars” <p>Outdoor activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature treasure hunt: Collect twigs, and frosty leaves for a winter collage. • Snow painting: Spray bottles with coloured water on white sheets or paper. • Ice exploration: Freeze small toys in ice blocks and let children melt them using pipettes and warm water. • Winter sensory walk: Explore crunchy leaves, puddles, and frosty grass. • Build a bear cave: Use cardboard boxes, blankets, and natural materials. • Mud kitchen bear picnic: Pretend play with mud pies and “honey” water. • Paw print trail: Make bear paw prints with chalk for children to follow. • Planet hop: Create stepping stones as planets for jumping games. • Space scavenger hunt: Hide shiny foil balls (planets) and rocket cut-outs. • Star spotting: Chalk stars on pavement or use glow-in-the-dark stickers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twist and twirl ribbons around sticks or tubes. • Use salad spinners to create art with paint and paper. <p>🦠 Tripod Grip</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trace outlines with crayons, chalk, or glitter pens. • Follow winding paths on paper using pencils or finger tracing. • Use chunky pencils or markers to draw themed scenes. <p>🦠 Pincer Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use tweezers to place small items into numbered trays. • Pick up and place tiny buttons onto templates. • Use tweezers to drop pom-poms into ice cube trays or cups. <p>Gross motor</p> <p>Balance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parachute Play: Lift and shake a large parachute together, hide under it, or bounce soft balls on top. • Balance Beam Walk: Use masking tape lines or low beams for walking, hopping, and tiptoeing. • Beanbag Toss: Throw beanbags into hoops or buckets for hand-eye coordination. • Bubble Chase: Blow bubbles and encourage children to run, jump, and pop them. • Tunnel Crawl: Set up play tunnels or cardboard boxes for crawling through. • Ribbon Dancing: Use ribbons or scarves for big arm movements and twirling. • Large Block Building: Work together to stack big foam blocks or crates to make towers. • Nature Movement Hunt: Find items outdoors and move like them (e.g., sway like a tree, hop like a bird). • Ball Rolling Races: Sit opposite a partner and roll a ball back and forth, increasing speed. <p>Core strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbing frame • Yoga <p>PE: Speed, Agility and Travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move forward, backwards and sideways with speed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use mirrors for experimenting with different expressions whilst playing. Looking at books together mention feelings, expressions. <p>Intensive Interaction:</p> <p>Key Principle: Behavioural Mirroring. This involves copying or reflecting the person’s actions, sounds, or expressions in a respectful and responsive way. It helps build trust, connection, and shared attention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds emotional connection and reduces anxiety. • Encourages self-expression and social engagement. • Helps children feel seen, understood, and safe. <p>Environmental strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual timetables or “now and next” boards to reduce anxiety and support transitions. • Consistent routines that help children feel safe and know what to expect. • Outdoor spaces with natural materials for exploration and calm. • Sensory play areas (e.g. sand, water, dough) that support regulation and shared experiences. • Small group areas for shared play, turn-taking, and conversation. • Role-play corners (e.g. home corner, shop, doctor’s office) to explore relationships and empathy. • Cozy corners with soft cushions, blankets, or tents where children can retreat and self-regulate. <p>Giving Effective Praise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praise immediately • Use ‘Praise for Being’ and ‘Praise for Doing’ • Move close to the child – bend, or get down to their level, seek eye contact o Look pleased, smile use a warm, genuine tone of voice and gestures e.g. thumb up • Be specific – describe what you like or admire – ‘label’ your praise, e.g. ‘Well done for putting your shoes on’ • Give praise for trying • Recognise small steps. Praise increases self-esteem. • Use praise consistently 	<p>Synthetic phonics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children follow Little Wandle SEND scheme at appropriate level based on individual need. • One week on each sound, teacher show the sound and explore sensory resources beginning with the letter (s,a,t,p,l,n) • SEND Foundations for Phonics - Rhyme Time <p>Early reading skills</p> <p>Interest in stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing fiction stories • Finding out about areas of interest through non-fiction • Browsing the library or book boxes • Matching labels, familiar logos and signs to the world around them <p>There is a strong emphasis on adult-led approaches in the suggested activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foil Star Hunt: Hide shiny foil stars in a tray of shredded paper or glittery fabric. Children dig, find, and count the stars. • Rocket Scoop & Sort: Fill a tray with small rocket cut-outs and pom-poms. Children scoop with spoons, sort by colour, and count each group. • Planet Size Compare: Provide foil-wrapped balls in different sizes. Children feel, sort into small/medium/large groups, and compare which is biggest. • Star Patterning in Glitter: Use star-shaped sequins in a shallow tray of glitter. Children create simple AB patterns by placing stars in rows. <p>Children’s maths will be linked to their small steps targets.</p> <p>Outdoor School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foil Star Hunt: Hide shiny foil stars or planets in the outdoor area. Children find, count, and group them by size or colour. • Rocket Jump Counting: Draw rockets on the ground with chalk. Children jump along the rockets and count each jump aloud. • Planet Size Sort: Collect balls or round objects outdoors (different sizes) and sort them into “small planets” and “big planets.” • Shape Constellation Chalk Art: Draw large shapes (circle, triangle, square) as “constellations” on the playground. Children trace and place natural items (stones, leaves) along the lines. • Space Pattern Trail: Create a trail using hoops or cones in a repeating colour pattern (e.g., red-blue-red). Children follow and call out the pattern as they move. <p>Messy maths Number songs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Five Little Snowflakes” – Count down as snowflakes melt away. • “Ten Snowballs Sitting in the Snow” – Add or take away snowballs as you sing. • “Five Little Penguins Sliding on the Ice” – Great for subtraction and movement. • “Five Little Bears in the Cave” – Bears go out and come back in (counting up/down). • “One Bear, Two Bear, Three Bear Growl” – Simple counting with actions (growl, stomp). • “Five Little Rockets Zooming to the Moon” – Rockets blast off one by one (or “whoosh”!).
--	---	---	--	---

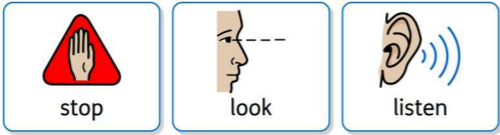
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moon crater digging: Fill trays with sand or soil for digging and exploring. <p>Intensive interaction The fundamentals of communication are</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attention and concentration span 2. Enjoying interaction or being with another person 3. Turn taking in behaviour exchanges 4. Sharing personal space 5. Using and understanding touch or physical contact 6. Using facial expressions 7. Using vocalisations with meaning 8. Understanding/using eye contact 9. Using non-verbal communication 10. Regulating arousal levels. <p>Use a range of intensive interaction techniques at appropriate time to support communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mirroring: Reflect the other person's movements, facial expressions, or vocalisations. This builds trust and helps them feel seen and understood. • Tuning In: Pay close attention to subtle signals—changes in breathing, gaze, posture. Respond to these cues like you would words. • Shared Focus: Centre your interaction around a mutual object or activity. It could be a toy, a topic, or even a sound. This creates common ground and encourages participation. • Pacing: Match the speed and rhythm of the person's interaction. If they're slow and calm, don't rush. If they're animated, pick up the energy. • Repetition with Variation: Repeating an action or word helps establish predictability and security, while adding small changes keeps things interesting and encourages learning. • Pause for Processing: Silence is golden. Allow ample time for the other person to process your input and respond in their own way and time. • Celebrate Any Response: Whether it's eye contact, a smile, or a shift in body language, reinforce all attempts at interaction. They're all valid communication. <p>Wellcomm: Follow Wellcomm SALT programme based on individual needs.</p> <p>Makaton:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow instructions to take part in running activities • Respond to cues to change direction • Explore different ways of starting and stopping movement • Recognise fast and slow movements • Show control in performing actions <p>Sensory experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glitter Snowball Smash: Use white playdough mixed with glitter or coconut flakes. Children roll, squash, and stack "snowballs" to make snowmen or icy towers. • Crunchy Ice Path: Tape bubble wrap under silver foil or cellophane to mimic icy ground. Children stomp, jump, and crawl to hear the "crunch." • Snowstorm Sensory Bin: Fill a tray with shaving foam, cotton wool, and glitter. Hide small animals or themed objects for children to find. <p>Extra-curricular</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KDDK dance lessons weekly (Yew Tree) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Counting Stars in the Sky" – Start with 10 stars and count down as they "twinkle away." • "Zoom Zoom Zoom, We're Going to the Moon" – Add a counting verse (e.g., "5, 4, 3, 2, 1, whoosh!"). • Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star <p>There is a strong emphasis on adult-led approaches in the suggested activities.</p>
--	--	--	--	--

<p>All staff to sign at given opportunities. Makaton sign of the day led by members of staff.</p> <p><u>Breakfast café</u> Have opportunity to spread their own butter/jam and be involve social time. Develop choice between fruit, toast and cereal. Communication boards to be used.</p> <p><u>(HelpKidsLearn)</u> Staff to choose which interactive video is appropriate for the children.</p>				
--	--	--	--	--

Curriculum Areas of Learning & Development

<u>My Independence</u>	<u>My Thinking & Cognition</u>	<u>My Sensory Exploration</u>	<u>My Expressive Arts</u>	<u>My World Around Me</u>
EYFS: Characteristic of Effective Learning SEND code: Communication and Interaction Preparation for adulthood.	EYFS: Characteristic of Effective Learning SEND code: Cognition and Learning	EYFS: Communication and Language SEND code: Sensory & Physical	EYFS: Expressive Art and Design SEND code: Cognition and Learning	EYFS: Understanding the World SEND code: Cognition and Learning Preparation for adulthood.

<p><u>Independent living & Employment:</u></p> <p>Explore different dressing skills such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zips • Laces • Hats • Shoes • Coats <p>Teaching independent skills such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tidying up toys • Toileting • Brushing teeth and washing hands properly • Taking turns and sharing during play • Preparing simple snacks like fruit or toast • Making simple choices like what fruit to eat or which game to play • Eating with a knife and fork <p>Understanding-Students will respond in differentiated ways, developing their understanding of self-help skills.</p> <p>Morning routine and song (signing song). Talk about how they are feeling today.</p> <p><u>Problem solving:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treasure hunts • Sensory obstacle course • Cause and effect games • Matching cards • Jigsaw puzzles • Shape sorters • Mystery Bag Guessing • Sorting challenges (sorting mixed items e.g. pom poms, feather, shapes). • Loose parts construction • Water play experience <p><u>Community Inclusion</u></p> <p>Rainbow Ribbon Run: Children wave colourful ribbons as they move freely or follow simple patterns, encouraging sensory exploration and gross motor skills.</p> <p>Group Collage Garden: Using pre-cut shapes like flowers and bugs, children contribute to a large garden-themed collage, supporting fine motor skills and teamwork.</p>	<p><u>Characteristics of effective learning:</u></p> <p><u>Playing and Exploring</u></p> <p>Children engage with the world through curiosity, experimentation, and hands-on experiences. They investigate and try things out, learning through trial and error.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide open-ended resources like blocks, sand, water, or role-play props that encourage imagination. • Join in play, following the child’s lead to build their confidence. <p><u>Active Learning</u></p> <p>Learners stay motivated when they’re deeply involved. They persist through challenges, enjoy achieving goals, and show satisfaction in mastering new skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for children to explore freely and repeat activities to achieve success. • Set achievable challenges to help children stay motivated. <p><u>Creating and Thinking Critically</u></p> <p>This involves developing ideas, making links between concepts, and using reasoning. Learners plan, test their thoughts, and adapt their thinking when things don’t go as expected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children to have opportunities to adapt resources and materials independently. • Encourage problem-solving by giving children time to experiment and reflect. <p><u>Awareness:</u></p> <p>Key stimuli should be chosen for each activity. Choose stimuli based on what is known about the student’s sensory needs- look for stimuli to which the student clearly responds. Present objects within the student’s perceptual field for short periods of time and assess response. Repeat after a few moments’ pause. Repeat the same stimulus several times before varying it. Use items which appeal to one sense at a time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory stories • Dance • Sensology 	<p><u>Sensory exploration & messy play</u></p> <p>Individualised Sensory Environment (ISE)</p> <p>ISE operates on the principle that if the learner wants (an object) enough they will be very motivated to indicate ‘more’ in some way when the object is removed. The object (a tray of dried pasta for example) is presented to the learner, who is then encouraged to interact with it. They may touch, or taste or smell the pasta with (initial) support or not, for a period of time – say 30 seconds or so. When the tray is withdrawn, the presenter will observe the learner’s reaction, assuming that interest will be supported by a look or a reach or a vocalisation to indicate that the learner wants more. The tray is re-presented to the learner, and this may be repeated two or three times more.</p> <p>Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foamy Galaxy Swirl: Mix shaving foam with black paint and glitter in a tray for children to swirl and create “space clouds.” • Mud Bear Tracks: Use mud or chocolate-scented playdough for children to press animal prints and explore textures. • Frozen Paint Smash: Freeze paint in ice cube trays; children smash and smear the melting colours on large paper. • Sticky Star Collage: Provide glue, foil stars, sequins, and glitter for children to stick and layer onto black paper. • Snowstorm Slime: Make white slime with glitter and small snowflake confetti for squishy, stretchy play. • Oats & Cocoa Bin: Fill a tray with oats mixed with cocoa powder for scooping, pouring, and hiding animal toys. • Moon Dust Tray: Combine flour and silver glitter for a soft, dusty texture; hide small rockets or stars for digging. • Ice Cube Sensory Smash: Freeze small toys in coloured ice cubes; children smash and melt them with spoons or pipettes. 	<p><u>Sensory Art with different media:</u></p> <p>Week 1 & 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frosty Collage Boards: Layer foil, cotton wool, glitter paper, and textured fabrics to create icy landscapes. Children glue and press for tactile exploration. • Snowflake Salt Painting: Draw snowflakes with glue, sprinkle salt, and drip blue watercolour for a melting ice effect. <p>Week 3 & 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furry Bear Collage: Use faux fur scraps, cotton wool, and brown felt to create bear shapes with tactile layers. • Animal Paw Print Painting: Dip sponges or hands in brown paint to stamp paw prints on large paper. <p>Week 5 & 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galaxy Swirl Art: Mix shaving foam with black paint and glitter in trays. Children swirl with fingers or stick to create galaxy patterns. • Foil Star Collage: Provide foil sheets, shiny paper, and star stickers for children to layer and glue onto black backgrounds for a starry sky. <p><u>Musical exploration:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copying pattern and beats • Making louder and quieter sounds • Banging faster and slower • Help kids learn songs <p><u>Singing and meaningful movement breaks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" Great for body awareness and sequencing. Vary the speed to keep it fun. • "The Hokey Cokey" Encourages whole-body movement, turn-taking, and following directions. • "If You’re Happy and You Know It" Use actions like clapping, stomping, tapping shoulders, or gentle jumping. • "Sleeping Bunnies" Combines calming and energizing phases—ideal for self-regulation. • "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" Sit facing a partner and rock gently—supports vestibular input and social bonding. 	<p>Weeks 1 & 2: Who is Hiding in the Snow?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice vs Warm Water Play: Children explore melting by touching ice cubes and pouring warm water over them. Notice changes and talk about “cold” and “warm.” • Snowball Scoop & Compare: Scoop cotton balls and pom-poms into containers. Compare which container feels “full” or “empty.” • Winter Texture Hunt: Hide soft, rough, and shiny items (mittens, foil, felt) in a tray. Children find and sort by feel. <p>Weeks 3 & 4: Don’t Tickle the Bear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frozen Animal Rescue: Freeze small animal toys in ice blocks. Children chip or melt to free them, exploring change and cause-effect. • Fur vs Feather Sorting: Offer trays with faux fur, feathers, and smooth fabrics. Children explore textures and group them by feel. • Animal Sound Bottles: Fill bottles with bells, rice, or beads to mimic animal sounds. Children shake, listen, and match to animal cards. <p>Weeks 5 & 6: Zoom to the Moon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rocket Air Blast: Use squeeze bottles or hand pumps to create bursts of air and “launch” lightweight rockets or pom-poms. Explore push and movement. • Foil & Glitter Sensory Bin: Fill a bin with foil scraps, shiny paper, and star confetti for scrunching and crinkling. Talk about “shiny” and “smooth.” • Space Texture Trail: Create a path with smooth foil, bumpy sponges, and soft fabric for crawling and feeling different textures. <p>All About Me & My World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter Dressing Station: Explore hats, scarves, and gloves. Practice putting them on and talk about how they feel (soft, fluffy, smooth). • Mirror Play with Frost: Use frosted mirrors to look at faces and make expressions. Children notice body parts and reflections. • Sequencing Daily Routines: Use Velcro cards showing simple winter routines (coat on, boots on) for children to arrange in order. <p>Animals & Nature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Sound Hunt: Hide sound bottles or play recordings of polar animals. Children match sounds to toys or pictures. • Nature Texture Tray: Collect frosty leaves, and twigs. Children feel, sort, and talk about what they notice.
---	--	---	---	---

<p>Sound Symphony: Children take turns adding their chosen sound (e.g., shaker, bell, drum) to a group rhythm, fostering listening, timing, and self-expression.</p> <p>Obstacle Adventure Trail: Set up a simple trail with tunnels, stepping stones, and balance paths to encourage motor planning, confidence, and peer interaction.</p> <p>Story Stones Circle: Children pick painted stones with simple images (sun, tree, animal) and take turns adding to a shared story, supporting imagination and language development.</p> <p>Health Eating and Drinking—Students will be supported to develop their own eating and drinking skills with support from medical professionals and Speech and Language Therapists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a child-friendly space with small utensils and supportive seating. Keep routines consistent and use visual aids or stories to guide mealtimes. Encourage independence through finger foods, choices, and gentle hand-over-hand assistance. Support motor skills with activities like blowing bubbles or messy play. Praise effort and use visuals or rewards for encouragement. Work with families and specialists for consistency and personalised strategies. Fun with food sessions <p>Being Independent to access activities of interest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows children how to make smell swatches and touch boards. Children experiment with smell and touch to explore the world around them (Sensology). <p>The Arts: Music and Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open ended tasks with a few choices Moving to music and expressing physically the emotions/response they feel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensory trays- have a range of tactile resources in a tray for children to explore (e.g. mud/ cotton wool/ grass/ leaves/ rice). <p>Exploration Key routines should follow as consistent and predictable a pattern as is possible within the constraints of school life and include a high level of repetition. Adults are looking for cues on how students react to touch of a variety of stimuli.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attention Autism Choice time through play Songs to cue transitions.  <p>Control and Early Problem Solving Objects are chosen within each routine which are inherently stimulating to the senses which the student is able to use. Encourage the student to attend to a wider range of objects within each activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to appropriate story books Sensory cooking Texture trays (range of different materials relating to touch). Mark making Construction <p>Sequence and Pattern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glow Stick Patterns: Use coloured light tubes to create simple AB patterns in a darkened space. Children copy or extend the sequence. Foil Star Trails: Place shiny stars and planets in a repeating pattern along a sensory path. Children follow and call out the pattern as they move. Ribbon Wrap Sequencing: Wrap coloured ribbons around cardboard tubes in a set order (e.g., red-blue-red). Great for wrist rotation and visual sequencing. Sound Pattern Play: Use bells, shakers, and drums to create a simple sound sequence (e.g., bell-shake-bell). Children repeat the pattern with instruments. Texture Pattern Boards: Stick strips of different textures (fur, foil, felt) onto a board in a pattern. Children trace and feel the sequence. 	<p>Sensology (linked to life skills): Week 1 & 2: Morning routine...getting ready for school Week 3 & 4: Bedtime routine...getting ready for bed Week 5 and 6: Being safe in the supermarket.</p> <p>I can see: I can touch: I can hear: I can smell: I can taste:</p> <p>1. Introduction & Hello</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin with a calm welcome—use a mirror, name song, or gentle greeting. Set the tone with soft lighting and relaxing music if appropriate. <p>2. Visual Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use lights, shiny objects, or moving visuals (like bubbles or glitter wands). Encourage tracking with the eyes or turning toward the light. <p>3. Auditory Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce sounds like bells, shakers, or calming music. Pause between sounds to allow for reaction or anticipation. <p>4. Olfactory (Smell) Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer safe, distinct scents (e.g. lavender, citrus, mint) on cloths or cotton pads. Present one at a time and observe responses. <p>5. Tactile (Touch) Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore textures like soft fabric, rough sponges, or warm/cool items. <p>6. Taste (if appropriate)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer small samples of safe, familiar tastes (sweet, sour, salty). For children who are tube-fed or avoid oral input, this step can be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The Grand Old Duke of York" Marching up and down in time with the rhyme helps with coordination and rhythm. "Follow the Leader" with Nursery Rhymes Choose a rhyme (e.g., <i>Jack and Jill</i>, <i>Incy Wincy Spider</i>) and have one child or adult lead simple movements that match the lyrics—others copy. <p>Action songs develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eye contact Shared attention Motivation Choice Anticipation interaction FUN! <p>Making vocalisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playing with vehicles, make car and aeroplane noises. Cooking, make the frying pan say “ Pouring sound as you pretend to pour out drinks. Making loud animal sounds with the objects and acting it out. 	<p>People Who Help Us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role Play Corner: Dress up as helpers (postal workers, doctors) with winter props like scarves and gloves. Sound Matching: Use siren sound buttons and match to vehicles (ambulance, snow plough). <p>Exploring Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sink or Float Winter Objects: Test baubles, and mini snowmen in water. Talk about what happens. Winter Texture Tray: Explore faux snow, silver rice, jelly with glitter, and peppermint-scented foam. Ice Discovery: Freeze small toys in ice and let children explore melting with warm water or salt. <p>There is a strong emphasis on adult-led approaches in the suggested activities.</p>
--	--	---	---	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large pieces of work that allow for bigger movements • Stepping through a process, rather than offering a model. • Limiting the choice of tool but opening the interpretation. <p><u>Independent communication</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now and next boards • Visual timetable • Use of symbol prompts • PECs boards • Choice Boards • Self-registration • Objects of reference • Photographs • Communication boards • Real size pictures of objects • Makaton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planet Hop Patterns: Lay out hoops or mats in colour patterns (e.g., blue-yellow-blue). Children hop along in the correct order. • Stack & Twist Cones: Use coloured stacking cups to stack in a repeating colour pattern, adding a twist motion for extra sensory input. 	<p>skipped or replaced with smell/touch.</p> <p>7. Vestibular & Proprioceptive Input</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include gentle movement: rocking, bouncing, or stretching arms and legs. • Use beanbags, therapy balls, or supported movement if needed. <p>8. Goodbye & Reflection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End with a consistent closing routine—perhaps a goodbye song or mirror wave. 		
--	--	--	--	--