

# Sensory Enrichment Foundations

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For improved results with Sensory Enrichment therapy, we recommend that you expose your child(ren) throughout the day to brief, pleasant sensory experiences.

The simplest and most natural way to do this is to turn existing routines into enriching routines.

**Incorporate a smell and touch pairing during normal routines without interrupting them such as:**

- at meal/snack time
- when the child changes clothes
- when you get into the car
- during TV commercials, using electronic devices, independent reading, or sitting together

## Bath Time

One of the best and most popular ways to help the brain recover at the end of a day is a **warm bath** followed by a **hand, toe, or foot massage** for 2 to 5 minutes while wrapped up or covered in a **warm towel**. Make the bath a soothing one, if possible, with scent and/or **instrumental music** and/or **dimmed lighting**. Feel free to adapt this procedure to fit with your family and bath time routines.

### Materials

- A non-toxic scent (essential oil, lotion, etc)
- Music (cd player, headphones or speakers, relaxing instrumental music)
- Warm towel or pajamas

## Bedtime

At the end of each day, our brains are drained, especially when we have had a lot of things to deal with. It is important to help the brain rejuvenate at the end of the day and prepare for a good night's sleep. The sense of smell is the only sense that is not "dimmed" while we sleep. We can leverage that to help them have a deeper and most restful sleep and also to help them feel refreshed when they wake up. Put a **scent on a tissue and place it inside the pillowcase**. Once they get ready to sleep or as they fall asleep, have them listen to a few minutes of **relaxing orchestral music**. It's best to use headphones in a dark room, but if they do not do well with headphones, you may use good quality speakers and keep the environment quiet.

### Materials

- A non-toxic scent (essential oil, lotion, etc.)
- Music (cd player/device, headphones or built-in speakers, relaxing instrumental music)

## In the environment

Set up the environment with more **textures, smells, music, art**, and other pleasant passive sensory opportunities in common places of the home. It's hard to get all the sensory pairings done all the time. A few ideas to enrich the environment include:

**Apply a fragrance to their collar.** This way, as they move around, they will occasionally get a whiff of the scent. You can also add fragrance diffusers in a few key locations around the home.

**Place textured welcome mats such as the [\(Clean Machine Astroturf Doormat on Amazon\)](#) in a few high traffic locations around the home** (helps with speech development and sensory processing) and let them explore the textures with their feet. You can also place a textured mat under a desk or a favorite spot at the kitchen table.

## Reduce Stress Overload and Increase Downtime

Most people who have challenges with processing information try to control their discomfort by creating overriding sensory information need a place where they can feel comfortable and a **quiet place with less visual stimuli** will be the best choice. It is usually a good idea to **speak softly**

Sensory Enrichment therapy will help the brain grow stronger and develop new skills. While it's a good idea to watch for teaching moments, it is not necessary to impose teaching moments all the time. It's important to **give breaks during the day when they can do less and not be expected to perform**. In fact, downtime is usually when the brain grows!