

Lesson Plan

Unit Name: Sensory Awareness Through Creative Arts

Stage: Stage Three

Lesson name: *Weighted Sock Buddies*

Duration: 90 Minutes

Lesson Overview

Big idea: Sometimes artists make art with more than one purpose. I am an artist and I can make a sensory tool to help me regulate sensory input.

Throughout this lesson, students will create an artwork that doubles as a sensory tool. Students will produce a “Weighted Sock Buddy” that can be held, rested in someone’s lap or placed on the shoulders, cuddled or smelled. This sensory tool is great to use for focus, calming and grounding.

Students will start the lesson by participating in a card tower building challenge to help improve focus. They will then view slides that present the importance of sensory tools to those experiencing sensory challenges. They will learn how some people need extra help to concentrate, and that sensory tools, such as fidget tools can help them focus. Students will also learn who artists are, what they do and what they make. After exploring the idea that artists can make beautiful things that are also useful, students will create their own sensory tool. Prior to constructing their own Weighted Sock Buddy, students answer prompts relating to the usability of their sensory tool. Students will then reflect on their learning by communicating the impact their sensory tool could have on their self-management skills as well as commenting on the materials used in their artwork.

Lesson Outcomes

A student will learn to:

- think about their art making as a kind of social practice that employs both their own resources and their understanding of art
- interpret subject matter which is of local interest in particular ways in their making of artworks
- organise and assemble materials in various ways in the making of artworks suited to particular purposes and think about the meaning of their decisions.

A student will learn about:

- how artists engage in a form of social practice in making art and contribute to the field of the visual arts

- a range of concepts and subject matter that is of interest to the art world and community
- how concepts and materials are thought about, organised and assembled, and serve different ends in artworks that they and others make
- how artworks can be subject to different interpretations by artists and audiences.

Syllabus Outcomes	Teaching, Learning and Assessment
<p>Creative Arts Making VAS3.2 Makes artworks for different audiences, assembling materials in a variety of ways. Appreciating VAS3.3 Acknowledges that audiences respond in different ways to artworks and that there are different opinions about the value of artworks. VAS3.4 Communicates about the ways in which subject matter is represented in artworks.</p> <p>Science and Technology ST3-2DP-T plans and uses materials, tools and equipment to develop solutions for a need or opportunity.</p> <p>English EN3-1A communicates effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes using increasingly challenging topics, ideas, issues and language forms</p>	<p>TEACHING - Learning intention</p> <p>Warm-up</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Card tower Challenge In teams, students have 5 minutes to create a card tower. The aim is to be the team with the tallest tower made only of playing cards, when the timer goes off. <p>The focus of this warm-up is for students to practise keeping focus on a specific task for a set timeframe. The hope is that over time, you will be able to steadily increase the time limit when attention spans develop.</p> <p>LEARNING</p> <p>Group Activities: Lesson Content</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Display Sensory Tools Toolkit or the Sensory Session Toolkit Fact Sheet and have a brief discussion on sensory tools and how they can positively impact our day-to-day life. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>More than 4.3 million people in Australia have a disability. Some disabilities include sensory challenges.</i> - <i>We have 8 senses: sight, smell, taste, hearing, touch, proprioception (where I am in space), vestibular (my sense of balance) and interoception (how I feel inside).</i> - <i>Sensory tools help us to regulate sensory input. They help us to receive sensory information in a manageable way.</i> - <i>Sensory tools are useful for helping people stay calm, feel safe and concentrate.</i>

and features.

[PDHPE](#)

PD3-1 identifies and applies strengths and strategies to manage life changes and transitions
PD3-9 applies and adapts self-management skills to respond to personal and group situations.

- *Sensory tools, such as fidget tools, can help build a mental wall to separate everything going on in our head and around us, so that you can focus on the task at hand.*
- *Some people may seek to stimulate their senses or increase their alertness. Others may want to minimise sensory input or decrease alertness.*
- *Some people may have difficulty processing specific types of sensory information.*
- *Some examples of sensory tools are: weighted animals, fidget tools (squishy balls, spinners, cubes, putty) balance items (boards, cushions) auditory reducing ear muffs.*

Alternatively, share the Toolkit slides to Google Classroom and have the students take notes.

2. Display [An Artist...](#)

Discuss with students:

- *What is an artist?*
(A person who creates art using conscious skill and creative imagination.)
- *What do they do?*
(Painting, sculpture, literature, architecture, cinema, music, theatre.)
- *What do they make?*
- *Artists can make things that are useful as well as pretty. What is something that was made to look beautiful but also has another purpose?*
(E.g. stained glass windows, hand painted bowls, First Nations rock art.)

Individual activities

1. Prior to constructing their own Weighted Sock Buddy, students complete the [Weighted Sock Buddy Planning Sheet](#)

On the sheet they will answer the following prompts:

- Synonyms for calm
- I feel calm when...
- Ways I can calm myself down
- I want my Weighted Sock Buddy to look like this
- Materials needed

2. Display [Weighted Sock Buddy Instructions](#)

Weighted Sock Buddies can be held, rested in someone's lap or placed on the shoulders, cuddled or smelled. They are great to help with focus, calming and grounding.

You may choose to print a copy of the [instructions](#) (pages 5 - 12) for students to use, and/or display the slides for students to follow.

3. Students create their own [Weighted Sock Buddy](#).

Group Activity: Reflection

Students may complete the [Weighted Sock Buddy Reflection Sheet](#) individually, or you may choose to have a class discussion lead by the following guiding questions:

- *What is a Sensory Tool?*
- *Why did we make these sock buddies?*
- *Why did we choose to make them weighted/heavy?*
- *When would be a good time to use my sock buddy?*
- *Who else could this sensory tool help?*
- *How could I help someone when they don't feel comfortable?*
- *What materials did I use to create this sensory tool?*

Some students may benefit from completing the [Differentiated Weighted Sock Buddy Reflection Sheet](#).

1. In the photo frame, students would draw a picture of their sock buddy.
2. In the rectangle towards the top right of the page, students write a name for their sock buddy.
3. Students would colour the faces that match the emotion for both of the following questions:
 - *I could use my sock buddy when I am feeling...*
 - *It can help me feel...*
4. Students circle the pictures of the items they included in/on their sock buddy.

Pictures from left to right are as follows

- Top line: stockings, Lego, broccoli, sock, 3 x squishy balls, filling material, essential oils
- Bottom line: eyes, feet, felt/material, banana, cable tie
- Items listed that students would **not** circle: Lego, broccoli, banana

Adaptations, Considerations and/or Adjustments

Note: Think about how this lesson may affect students in your class and make any of these adaptations that you feel necessary.

Physical:

- The Card Tower warm-up calls for students to use their hands. If this activity is not suitable for some students, replace the warm-up with the [Timed Task Cards](#) from Stage 2's lesson plan.
- Students may require assistance handling the equipment required to create their sensory tool. Students with dexterity issues can make a worm, snake or caterpillar using a similar technique. You may choose to pre-cut the felt feet to eliminate the majority of the fine motor tasks.

Vision:

- When displaying instructions and visuals, it may be beneficial to increase the size of fonts or pictures.
- Instructions may also be given verbally.
- Ensure students are seated near the front of the room to view visuals/videos.

Hearing:

- Include visuals to support lesson activities.
- Have instructions written simply on the board.
- Some assistance or a sound device may be needed for direction during the whole task.

Sensory:

- Create a space in the classroom that gives students a 'break' from constant environmental stimulants.

Non-verbal:

- Support students' preferred ways of communication.
- Incorporate technology or devices in group discussion.
- Ask targeted closed questions.

EAL/D:

- Display questions and instructions on the board for each activity in the lesson for clarification.
- Include visuals in addition to written resources.

Other:

- Be mindful of the word "disability" on the second page of the Sensory Tools Toolkit. As this page may lead to discussion, ensure not to use words such as "special needs," "crippled," "unfortunate," or "handicapped". Also do not refer to people without disabilities as "normal" or "healthy." Always ensure you are using first person language such as "person with disability" rather than "disabled person", and "person who uses a wheelchair" not "wheelchair bound person" or "boy with autism" not "autistic boy" etc.

- Please read [PWDA Language Guide: A guide to language about disability](#) before starting this unit of work. This guide is a helpful resource, as it has been written by people with disability to assist the general public in respectfully talking about disability. It is important to be aware that the language that is used when talking about people with disability has an impact on how they are perceived and treated.
- This lesson introduces a fair amount of new information. In order to keep engagement levels high, some students may benefit from having this lesson split up over multiple sessions.

Resources

- [Stage 3 Weighted Sock Buddy Teacher Guide](#)
- [Learning intention](#)
- [Card Tower Challenge](#)
- [Sensory Tools Toolkit](#)
- [Sensory Session Toolkit Fact Sheet](#)
- [An Artist](#)
- [Weighted Sock Buddy Planning Sheet](#)
- [Weighted Sock Buddy Instructions](#)
- [Weighted Sock Buddy Reflection Sheet](#)

Resources for Adjustments (if applicable)

- [Differentiated Weighted Sock Buddy Reflection Sheet](#)

Lesson Evaluation/Reflection	Yes
The lesson adequately addresses syllabus outcomes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The lesson reflects the needs, interests and abilities of all students.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The lesson provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they know and can do.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The lesson includes a variety of teaching and learning activities, and resources to address the learning needs of all students.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional comments and suggestions for improvement:	



PLEASE HELP US IMPROVE!

We want to continue to improve our lessons and resources to ensure that they are benefiting not only the students, but you as teachers.

We would appreciate your time in completing this short survey.



[Click here to
access the survey.](#)

Stage Three

Weighted Sock Buddy



Teacher Guide



Uses & Benefits

The weighted sock buddy can be held, rested on someone's lap or shoulders, cuddled or used to smell. It's great to help with focus, calming and grounding.

Materials & Equipment

Materials for each student

- 1 x large, colourful, patterned and suitably textured sock (approximately 35cm in length unfilled)
- 2 x sections of pantyhose/stockings or thin socks (approximately 20cm in length)
- 1 x cable tie
- 3 x squishy balls (see previous activity)
- 2 x eyes
- 2 - 4 cups x filling material, e.g. rice, glass beads, aquarium gravel, or poly pellets
- A range of fidget pieces to add texture and for embellishment like beads, ribbon, paper clips, fluffy balls, pipe cleaners
- felt offcuts
- Template for feet
- glue
- Optional - essential oils.

Equipment

- Hot glue gun
- Pins
- Scissors
- Funnel
- Small scoop or cup measurement
- Texta/marker.

How to make

1. Print out the feet template and cut out both the front and back feet.
2. Place the paper template over some felt offcuts and secure them with a pin. Cut 2 x front feet and 2 x back feet.
3. Place 2 squishy balls and knot sides together, so they form a long cylinder shape. Secure them by firmly wrapping the balls together in some felt or fabric.
4. Take 2 stockings or thin socks and fill them both with poly pellets, rice or gravel. Secure them at the open end by tying a tight knot in the fabric. Ensure that they are larger than the tail section in width and that one filled sock is larger than the other.
5. To construct the platypus take the large fluffy sock and add the wrapped squishy ball to the toe section. This will form the tail of your platypus. Then add the larger filled ball and push it as close to the tail as possible with the knot end of the sock in the middle and facing the opening of the sock.
6. Next, take the smaller filled ball and place the knot side of it facing the knot of the larger ball so that it can not be felt from the outside of the sock.
7. Add the final squishy ball and push all sections together so that they are as close as possible, ensuring there is about 8cm of sock left at the open end before securing the main sock with a tightly pulled cable tie as close to the gilled section as possible.
8. Fold the leftover part of the sock back over the squishy ball to form the bill.
9. Select whatever embellishments or decorations you wish to use on the outside of your platypus.
10. Turn on the hot glue gun and fasten the eyes, feet and any other embellishments you wish to use (see caution below). You may also wish to secure the bill fabric by running a strip of glue around the inside edge of the folded piece and joining it to the other side.
11. If you would like to add some essential oils to your sock buddy, place a couple of drops on the under section or on the inside socks before you secure them as the oil may stain the fabric.

Where to get supplies

- Poly pellets or fine gravel can be purchased in bulk online. The fine gravel may also be purchased from aquarium suppliers. If you are choosing rice or other legumes, these can be purchased from bulk food suppliers online through a number of suppliers.
- As a way of promoting sustainability, you could ask students to bring in their odd socks and/or stockings that have a small run or hole in them that would otherwise be thrown out. If students don't have any odd socks they might have a pair they would like to contribute to the activity to save on costs, otherwise, these can be purchased from a department or grocery store.
- Cable ties can be found at hardware or variety stores.

Templates

See the template at the end of this document for platypus feet cut outs.

Caution

- If there is a risk of someone chewing the toy, use buttons for the eyes and securely sew the eyes and feet on or draw them on, to avoid a choking hazard. You may also choose one of the variations below which have fewer parts on them.
- When using a hot glue gun ensure that children are properly supervised so they do not burn themselves or get glue everywhere. You may wish to use craft glue instead for a safer option however the glue may not hold as well or set as quickly.

Variations

- For younger students or students with dexterity issues, you can make a worm, snake or caterpillar using a similar technique.
- For a worm or snake use one internal sock for the filling to sit in and one external sock.
- For a caterpillar, you may wish to add fist-sized filled balls to some small stockings/socks then place them inside one large sock.

Big Idea

Sometimes artists make art with more than one purpose.

I am an artist and I can make a sensory tool
to help me regulate sensory input.

Learning Intentions

- I can make artworks for different audiences, assembling materials and using tools in a variety of ways
- I can apply and adapt self-management skills and communicate how my sensory tool will help with my emotions



CARD TOWER

CHALLENGE

In teams, you will have **5** minutes
to create a tower using only
playing cards

The aim is to be the team with the
tallest tower when the timer goes off.





Sensory Tools

**More than 4.3 million people in Australia
have a disability.**

Not all disabilities are obvious. Some of
these disabilities include
sensory challenges.

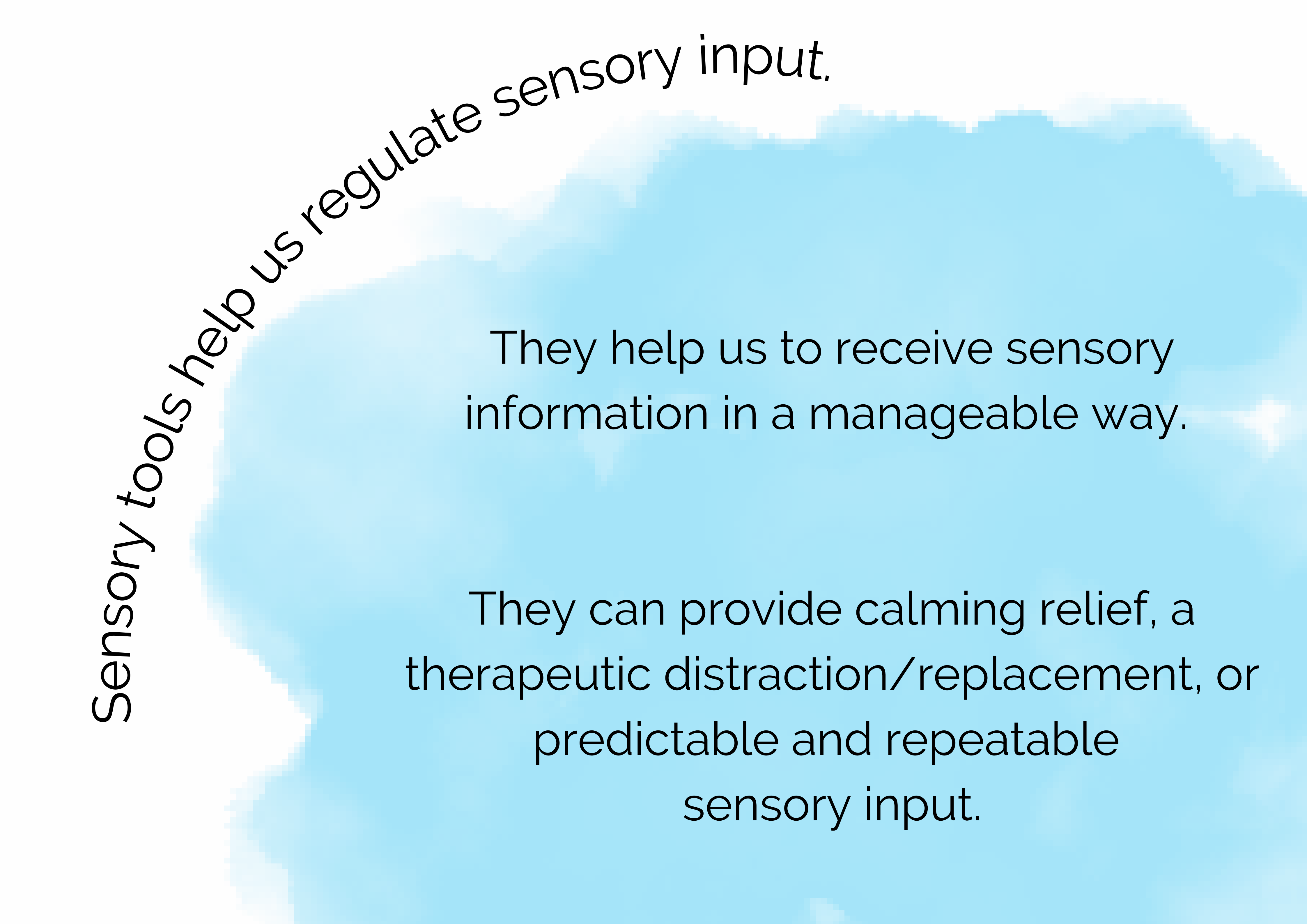




All day, every day, we are
surrounded by and experience
sensory stimulation.

Our 8 Senses:

- 1 Sight
- 2 Smell
- 3 Taste
- 4 Hearing
- 5 Touch
- 6 Proprioception
Where I am in space.
- 7 Vestibular
My sense of balance.
- 8 Interoception
How I feel inside.



Sensory tools help us regulate sensory input.

They help us to receive sensory information in a manageable way.

They can provide calming relief, a therapeutic distraction/replacement, or predictable and repeatable sensory input.

Sensory tools can assist to

calm

focus

distraction

Lots of different people benefit from using some sort of external 'sensory tool' to enable them to:

- concentrate
- regulate their emotions
- absorb information within the environment around them

Working memory helps prioritise tasks and only keeps what is needed at the forefront of our thoughts.

THINK TANK

Listening

Assignment

Thirsty



Soccer

Social Media

Gaming

Gardening

Netflix

Your pet

Lunch play

Some disabilities, learning difficulties, or even stress, can affect how your working memory functions, allowing ALL of the other things you could/should be doing to fight for space in your thoughts.



Build a Wall!



Sensory tools, such as fidget tools, can help build a **mental wall** to separate everything else so that you can focus on the task at hand.



**Some sensory items
are designed to help be
the buffer, and can create
a temporary shelter.**

Once feeling more secure,
a person is better able to deal with current
situations and environments.

Sensory tools

help us regulate
sensory input

provide calming
relief

are a therapeutic
distraction/
replacement

help us to receive
sensory information
in a manageable way

provide predictable
and repeatable
sensory input

Some people may seek to
**stimulate their senses or increase
their alertness**

for
example,
people
who have
ADHD

Others may want to **minimise sensory**
input or **decrease alertness**

such as
those with
autism or
anxiety

The difficulty for others may lie with

**processing specific types of
sensory information**

such as a specific frequency of sound.



**The important thing to remember
is that some people experience difficulty
with **sensory regulation** and may
require assistance
to achieve a better balance.**

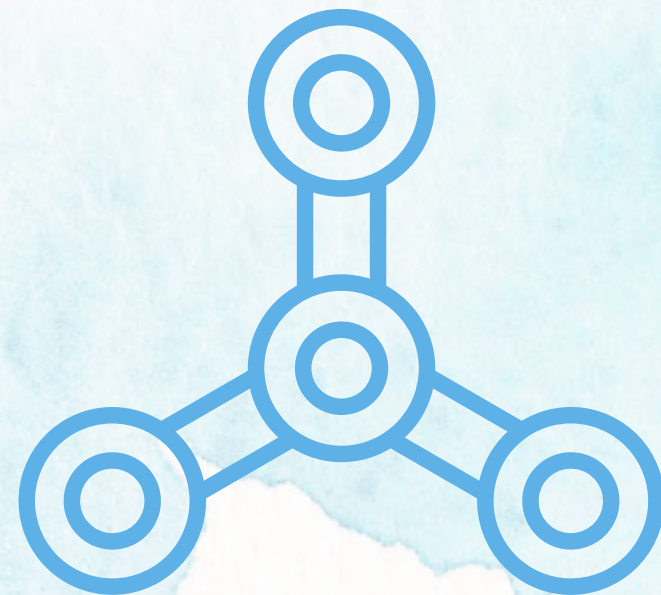


Sometimes if the situation or environment cannot be changed, people can use **sensory tools to assist them to increase or decrease their alertness,** depending on what is appropriate for the situation.

There are many types of sensory items that might help.

Some common items include:

- weighted animals
- fidget toys
- balance items
- auditory reducing earmuffs



Benefits of creating sensory friendly tools

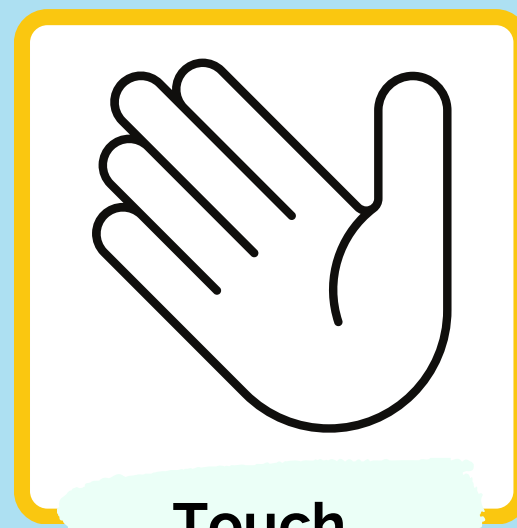
- Build skills and confidence in welcoming people with disability.

- Reduce sensory barriers so everyone has equal access.

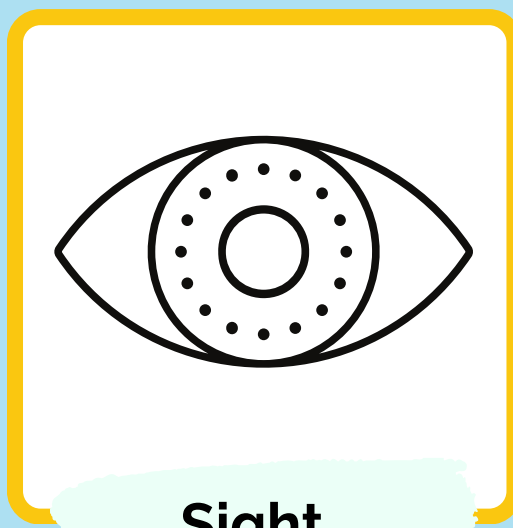
- Increase the number of people who can participate.

- Sensory tools are not only beneficial for those who are neurodiverse - everyone can enjoy them.

Our 5^{main} senses



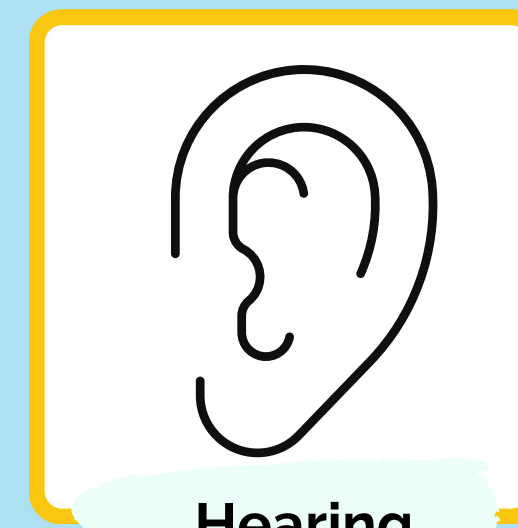
Touch



Sight



Taste



Hearing



Smell

Some people have sensory challenges.



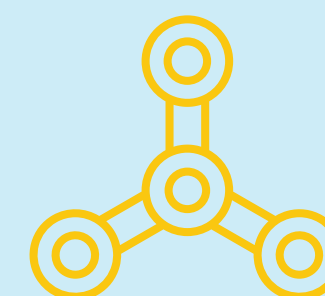
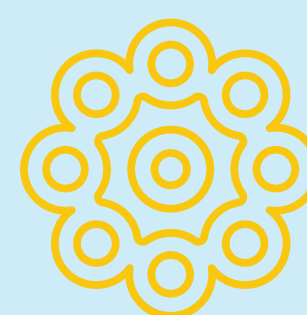
Lots of people use sensory tools to help them

- **concentrate**
- **regulate their emotions**
- **absorb information**

There are many types of sensory items that might help.

Some common items include

- weighted animals
- fidget toys
- balance items
- ear muffs



Artist:

a person who creates art

Such as

- painting
- sculpture
- music
- writing

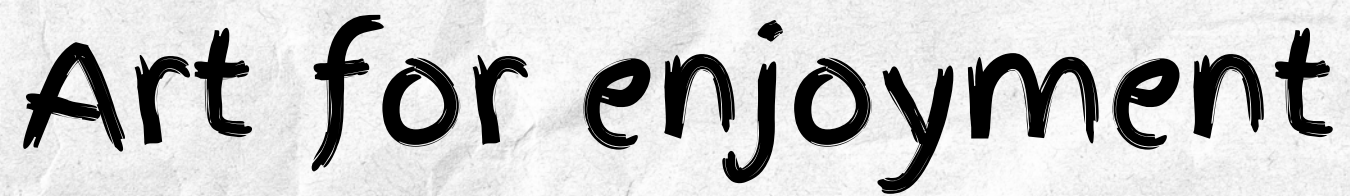
using conscious skill and creative imagination

There are 7 different forms of art

- ✿ painting
- ✿ sculpture
- ✿ literature
- ✿ architecture
- ✿ cinema
- ✿ music
- ✿ theatre

Sometimes artists make art
just for people to

enjoy



However,

sometimes artists make
art with

more than one purpose

An artist created this large sculpture.

It was created to be

beautiful

but...

can you
guess what **else**
this sculpture was
designed for?



It was also
designed to be;

a slide!

a playground!





Calming Music

Glass Lamp


Stained Glass Window

Educational Book

First Nations Rock Art

Sandwich Art

Painted Bowl

These artists 
created artwork that could be
used by *lots of people*.

Their art is nice to look at,
but it was also created with at
least one **other purpose** in mind.

Breathing Pavilion by Ekene Ijeoma - New York



Breathing Pavilion is an outdoor art installation that is intended to create calm by mimicking the speed of a deep breathing technique.

It is a circular space surrounded by columns that light up at intervals. It provides a space for residents to take a moment and catch their breath.

COSMO by Andrés Jaque and his architecture firm - New York



COSMO is a gigantic structure that features an impressive arrangement of plants and pipes.

It was developed by an architect to process nearly 4000 litres of polluted water a day and make it clean and drinkable.

Amphitheatre by Marta Pan - Netherlands



Amphitheatre is created out of granite and is located in the Kroller-Muller Museum and Sculpture Park.

It was created to provide people with a place for viewing entertainment.
It has tiers of seating surrounding the performance area.

Winding Path Labyrinth, by Andrew Rogers - Nepal



Winding Path Labyrinth is a large-scale geoglyph made out of stone.

It has a single continuous winding path with several loops that lead to the centre.

A labyrinth is used for spiritual contemplation. It is a work to be experienced on foot and represents a journey and pilgrimage.

It can also be seen from very far away.

Name: _____

Circle the synonyms for *calm*

tranquil furious

hungry serene

harmonious mad peaceful

restful aggravated

composed content

untroubled

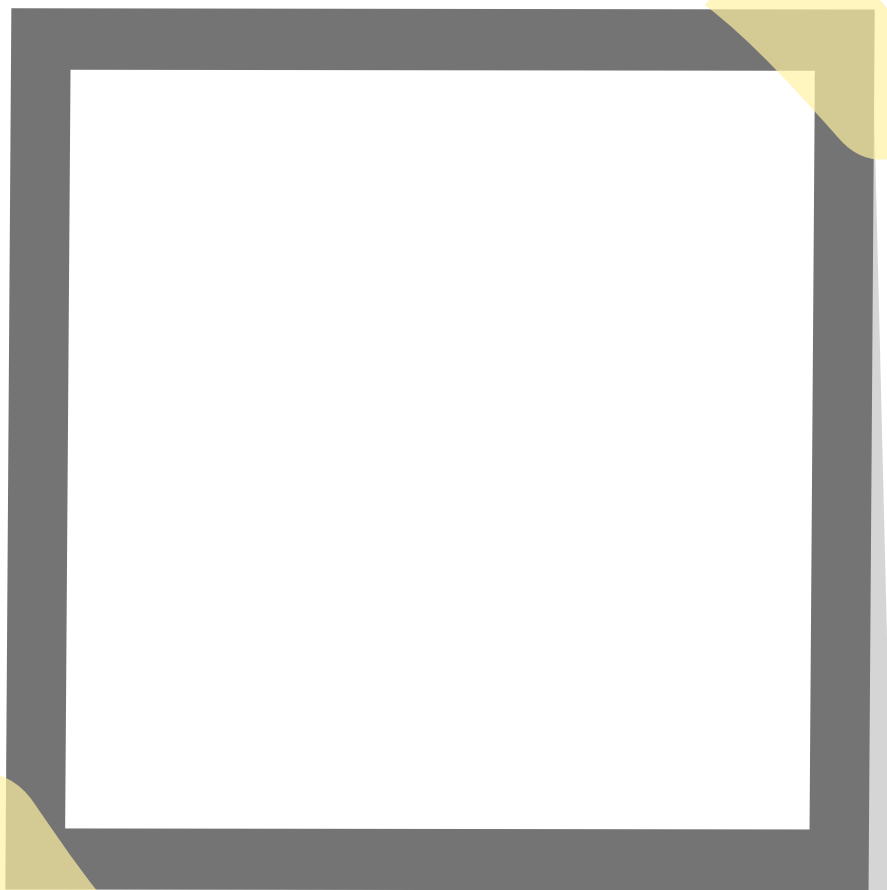
I feel calm when:

Ways I can calm myself down:

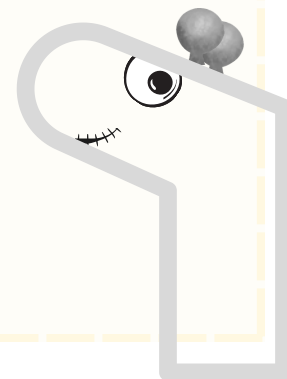


Weighted Sock Buddies can be held, rested in someone's lap or placed on the shoulders, cuddled or smelled. They are great to help with **focus, calming, and grounding.**

I want my Weighted Sock Buddy to look like this



Materials needed:



Make your own

Weighted Sock

Buddy



**The weighted sock buddy can be
held, rested in someone's lap or placed on the
shoulders, cuddled or smelled.**

They are great to use for

focus

calming

grounding



Materials and equipment

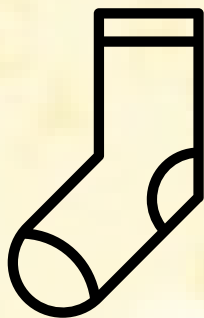


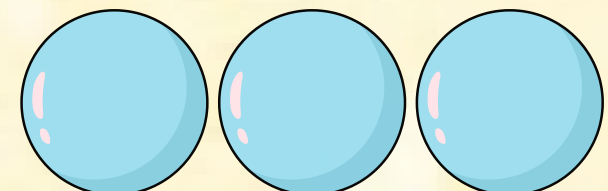
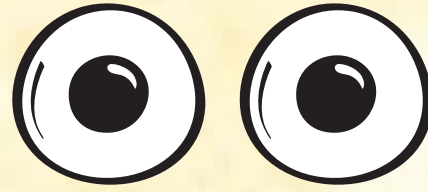
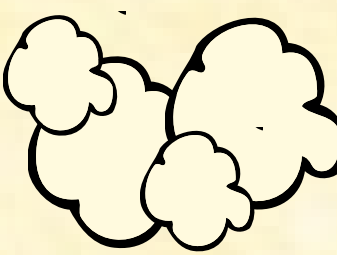




Materials you need:

- 1 x large, colourful, patterned and suitably textured sock (approximately 35cm in length unfilled)
- 2 x sections of pantyhose/stockings or thin socks (approximately 20cm in length)
- 1 x cable tie
- 3 x squishy balls (see previous activity)
- 2 x eyes
- 2 - 4 cups x filling material e.g. rice, glass beads, aquarium gravel or poly pellets
- a range of fidget pieces to add texture and for embellishment like beads, ribbon, paper clips, fluffy balls, pipe cleaners
- felt offcuts
- template for feet
- glue
- optional: essential oils

Equipment needed:

- hot glue gun
- pins
- scissors
- funnel
- small scoop or cup measurement
- texta/marker

Materials

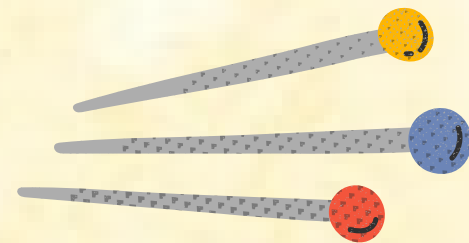
- 1x large sock 
- 2 x sections of stockings 
- 1 x cable tie 
- 3 x squishy balls (see Stage 1 activity) 
- eyes 
- 2 - 4 cups x filling material 
- a range of fidget pieces to add texture 
- felt offcuts 
- template for feet 
- essential oils 

Equipment

- hot glue gun



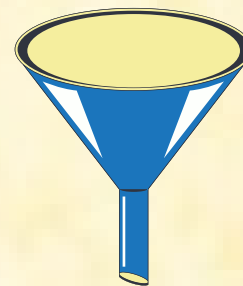
- pins



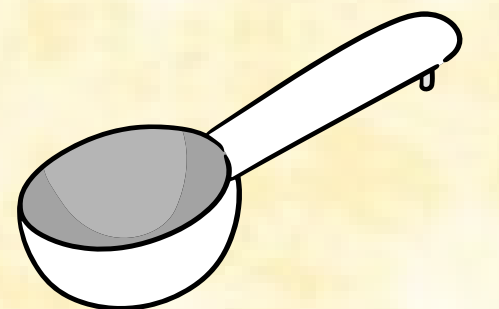
- scissors



- funnel



- small scoop or cup measurement


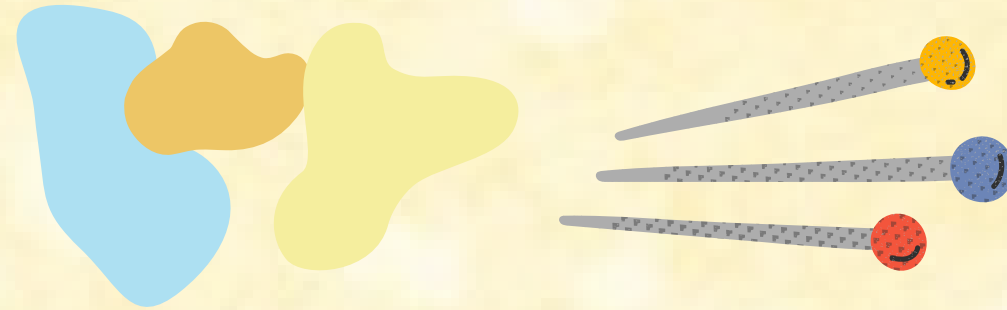


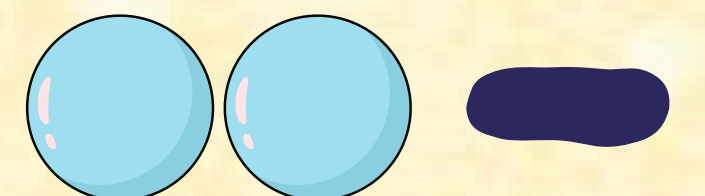
- texta/marker



Steps

1

- 1 Print out the feet template and cut out both the front and back feet. 
- 2 Place the paper template over some felt offcuts and secure them with a pin. Cut 2 x front feet and 2 x back feet. 
- 3 Place 2 squishy balls, knot sides together, so they form a long cylinder shape. Secure them by firmly wrapping the balls together in some felt or fabric.



Steps

2

4 Take 2 stockings or thin socks and fill them both with poly pellets, rice or gravel.



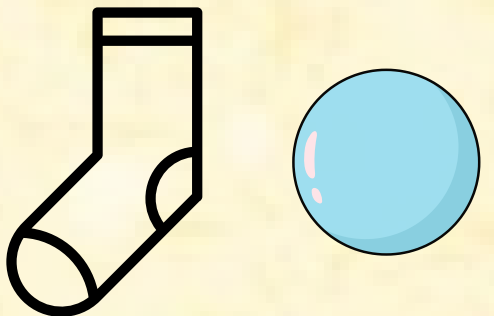
Secure them at the open end by tying a tight knot in the fabric.



Ensure that they are larger than the tail section in width and that one filled sock is larger than the other.

Steps

3

- 5 To construct the platypus take the large fluffy sock and add the wrapped squishy ball to the toe section. This will form the tail of your platypus. 

Then add the larger filled ball and push it as close to the tail as possible with the knot end of the sock in the middle and facing the opening of the sock.

Steps

4

6

Next, take the smaller filled ball and place the knot side of it facing the knot of the larger ball so that it can not be felt from the outside of the sock.

7

Add the final squishy ball and push all sections together so that they are as close as possible, ensuring there is around 8cm of sock left at the open end before securing the main sock with a tightly-pulled cable tie as close to the filled section as possible.



Steps

5

- 8 Fold the leftover part of the sock back over the squishy ball to form the bill.
- 9 Select whatever embellishments or decorations you wish to use on the outside of your platypus.

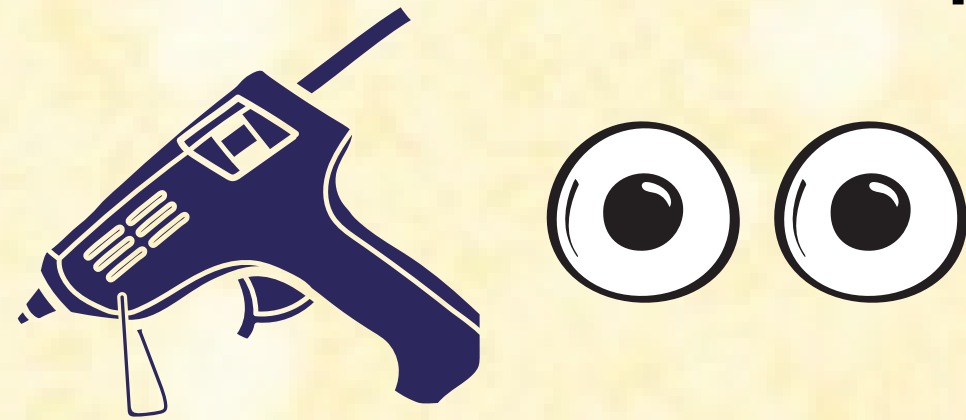


Steps

6

10

Turn on the hot glue gun and fasten the eyes, feet and any other embellishments you wish to use (see caution below). You may also wish to secure the bill fabric by running a strip of glue around the inside edge of the folded piece and joining it to the other side.



11

If you would like to add some essential oils to your sock buddy, place a couple of drops on the under section or to the inside socks before you secure them as the oil may stain the fabric.



Notes

Additional notes/considerations:

- Lavender and orange essential oils are known to be calming fragrances for most people. Please check with each student before assuming it is fine before adding as they may have an aversion to it and it may cause distress.

Caution:

- If there is a risk of someone chewing the toy, use buttons for the eyes and securely sew the eyes and feet on or draw them on to avoid a choking hazard. You may also choose one of the variations below, which have less parts on them.
- When using a hot glue gun ensure that children are properly supervised so they do not burn themselves or get glue everywhere. You may wish to use craft glue instead for a safer option however the glue may not hold as well or set as quickly.

Notes

Variations:

- For younger students or students with dexterity issues can make a worm, snake or caterpillar using a similar technique.
- For a worm or snake use one internal sock for the filling to sit in and one external sock.
- For a caterpillar you may wish to add fist sized filled balls to some small stockings/socks then place them inside 1 large sock.

Platypus Feet Template



Name: _____

WEIGHTED SOCK BUDDY REFLECTION

Date: _____

My buddy's name: _____

I CAN USE MY BUDDY

When I feel: _____

When I think: _____

When I want to: _____

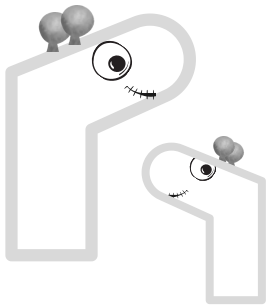
My Weighted Sock Buddy

ITEMS I INCLUDED ON MY SOCK BUDDY AND WHY

1

2

3



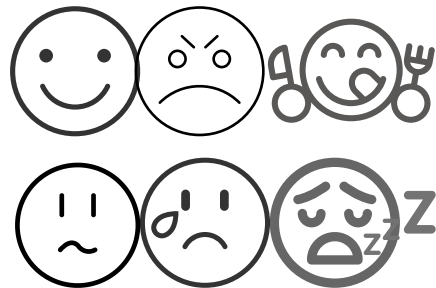
Name: _____

WEIGHTED SOCK BUDDY REFLECTION

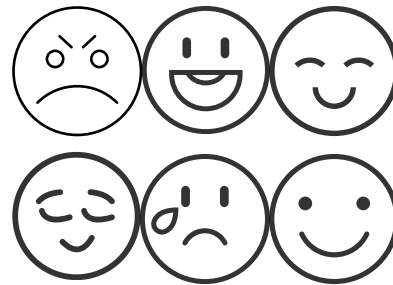
My buddy's name: _____

I CAN USE MY BUDDY

When I am feeling:



It can help me feel:



My Weighted Sock Buddy

ITEMS I INCLUDED ON MY SOCK BUDDY

