



Background Information

Sensory Rooms and low-stimulations environments are specially designed spaces containing a range of stimuli designed to provide a safe environment for individuals to engage their senses. Sensory space is important for athletes who have issues with sensory processing/integration and have difficulty regulating certain sensory stimuli to help them decompress and cope with their surroundings. Along with many other benefits related to developing sensory skills, these spaces can provide a moment of comfort and calmness.

Benefits of Sensory Spaces

- Improve focus and concentration
- Develop senses
- Provide a feeling of calm and comfort
- Promote relaxation
- Encourage socialization
- Promote cognitive development
- Improve motor development and coordination

Recommended Locations

Sensory spaces available at Special Olympics Opening Ceremonies, Healthy Athletes, or major event venues.

Space Requirements for Sensory Rooms

- Centrally located, but away from excessive external noise
- Soft lighting that can be dimmed is preferable, avoid strobe lighting and try to avoid fluorescent lighting
- Size and dimensions vary, based on the size of the event. On average around 500 square feet or larger is ideal
- Appropriate heating, cooling, and ventilation present

Safety Requirements






- Develop safety and risk management plan
- Engage Occupational Therapists and other clinicians with experience in creating sensory spaces and low-stimulation environments as leads.
- More than one volunteer MANDATORY when the volunteers in the Sensory Space are not certified Class A volunteers (permitted to be alone with an athlete) for security and policy purposes. However, it is still recommended that you have more than one volunteer present, even if they are Class A volunteers, to accommodate more athletes in the space and/or in case one volunteer must leave the space temporarily.

Communication Requirements

Incorporate communication about location and hours of availability through HODs, Healthy Athlete volunteers, and medical services.





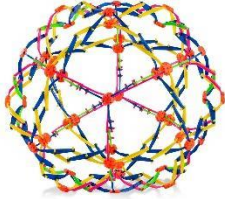
Recommended Supplies

It is recommended that you work with local organizations or companies to borrow supplies or have them donated.

Item	Priority Level	Photo	Estimate Cost
Exercise balls/therapy balls	High		\$15 Example
Crash Mat	High		\$50-\$350 Example
Noise Canceling Earmuffs	High		\$10 Example
Weighted Blankets	High		\$30-\$50 Example
Stress Balls	High		\$1-\$3 Example






Special Olympics Sensory Space



Item	Priority Level	Photo	Estimate Cost
Fluorescent Light Covers	High		\$30-50 Example
Fidget Toys	High		\$5-\$20 Example
Music players	Medium	 <p data-bbox="878 1205 1276 1276">*A speaker or individual music players depending on athlete preference. Meditative music should be selected.</p>	\$10-\$50 Example Example
Beanbag Bags	Medium		\$30-\$60 Example
Expanding Sphere	Medium		\$5-\$10 Example

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Item	Priority Level	Photo	Estimate Cost
Kinetic Sand or Modeling Clay	Medium	 <p>*Select a product that will not damage to the room</p>	\$5-\$15 Example-Sand Example-Clay
Sensory Bins filled with rice	Medium		\$5+ Example
Soft Rocker	Low		\$100-\$155 Example
Nanoleaf Tiles	Low		\$200-\$400 Example
Sensory Swing	Low	 <p>*Requires wall or ceiling mount</p>	\$30-\$250 Example

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Photo Examples of Sensory Spaces

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/j6wy1oad0spnqvh/AAA4vH_teeaCD3Z1vmoHoPiDa?dl=0

Additional General Recommendations

- Engage athlete leaders in development and implementation of space
- Partner with local organizations for volunteers and supplies
- Provide noise cancelling earmuffs in areas where noise might reach high levels at all Special Olympics events
- Consider reducing noise volumes at all events
- Utilize fragrance free cleaners and ask attendees not to wear perfume
- Limit flash photography
- Develop proper signage and communication plans
- Appropriately select spaces that are large enough to accommodate the expected attendance for all events
- Ask participants to use flappause (sign language applause) with auditory commentary

Evaluation of Sensory Spaces

Please use the following evaluation tool as athletes enter and exit the sensory space

https://specialolympics.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eo2WuAmKQv8Njmt