

## Helpful Handy Hints: Finding Reinforcers

This is an area that is often problematic for many of our students. The key is to observe their behaviors when left to their own devices and then to use these things as a starting point. Remember that a student's reaction to sensory input can vary between days and even within a day, and therefore whenever sensory strategies are being used, careful observation of the student's reaction is advised. For students with variable or inconsistent reactions to sensory input, an assessment with an Occupational Therapist may be advised.

Behaviors Observed → The student gazes at lights or out of the window, fixates at rotating objects, looks at his hands or flaps his fingers in front of his eyes.		
Type of self-stimulation: VISUAL		Useful websites
Spinning discs	Light toys	SEN switcher  Priory Woods School
Laser discs	Flashing toys	
Spinning toys	Spinning tops	
Sand egg timers	Wind-up toys	
oil droppers	Executive toys (such as swinging balls)	
Snow globes	Kaleidoscope	
TV or video	View master	
Computer screensaver	Coil Toys	

Behaviors Observed → The student vocalizes, hums, clicks his tongue, taps furniture or clicks fingers		
Type of self-stimulation: AUDITORY		
Drum	Bells	Music box
Triangle	Whistles	TV or Video
Musical Instruments	Tambourine	Stethoscope
Radio	Hair dryer	Music
Push-Pull toys that make noise	Talking toys (e.g. furbies)	Conversation
clackers	Buzz toys	Talking Books
	Toy piano	

Behaviors Observed → The student touches his own or another person's body parts, pinches himself, places his finger or objects in his mouth		
Type of self-stimulation: TACTILE		
Shower scrunchies	Silly Putty	Hand lotion
Soft toys	Vibrating toys	Sand or water play
Puppets	Massager	Scrubbing brush
Talc	Hand painting	
Electric fan	Face painting	
Shaving cream	Blankets	
Koosh ball	Make up Brush	

Behaviors Observed → The student rocks, bounces or spins his body. He has strange postures (such as head stands or upside down), toe walks, holds head on one side or head bangs		
Type of self-stimulation: VESTIBULAR		
Items that recreate motion or body position Rocking horse Rocking chair Firm stroking or patting of body parts	Therapy or Pilates ball Hammock Swing Action Rhymes Vibration or buzz toys Barrels to roll in or on Pedal Cars Spinning office chair	Balance Ball Slide Roundabouts Trampolines Push/Pull games against resistance

Behaviors Observed → The student smells self, other people, items or equipment		
Type of self-stimulation: SMELL		
Items that Smell Scented Crayons/ Pens	Aromatherapy oils Incense Play dough	Flowers A Smell Kit Scented Lotions
To make a “Smell Kit” use some containers with lids (such as empty camera film containers), place some scented items in the container and top with cotton wool. Keep lid closed until needed. Some ideas could be:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herbs and spices</li> <li>• Peppermint</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Onion</li> <li>• Citrus-oil extracts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soap</li> <li>• Cake essences (vanilla coffee, coconut, etc)</li> </ul>

Behaviors Observed → The student licks himself or other people/ he may lick objects or put them in his mouth	
Type of self- stimulation: ORAL MOTOR OR TASTE	
Sweet and sour contrasts (such as lemon or lime juice) Hot and cold contrasts (such as fried ice cream!) Items that have different tastes Strong flavored crisps or sweets Putting lots of ice into cold drinks Thick shakes through a straw	For oral stimulation try:  Aquarium air tubing to chew Teething rings and toys Chewing gum/ sweets Textiles to chew Tooth and tongue brushing Electric toothbrush

Adapted from the PECS Manual.