



SENSORY STORY TIME

Reading with young children is a powerful way to help develop language skills. When we read with children, they learn new words, are exposed to new content, and practice important pre-reading concepts including print awareness and narrative skills. When planning story time experiences, it is important to remember that children have individual needs and interests. **The goal of SENSORY STORY TIME** is to offer experiences that invite **ALL children** to participate.

Sensory processing refers to our ability to manage information through our senses.

Our SENSES include:

- **Auditory** – Hearing
- **Visual** – Sight
- **Tactile** – Touch
- **Olfactory** – Smell
- **Gustatory** – Taste
- **Vestibular** – Balance
- **Proprioceptive** – Awareness of body in space

Consider the following as you plan and provide story time experiences for young children.

The Physical Environment

Think about the physical space of your learning environment. This includes lights, colors, noises, and materials such as posters and rugs. Bright lights, vibrant colors, clutter, and background noise all provide sensory input that children have to process and manage. Certain environments and stimuli can be overwhelming. Think about adjustments you can make that will be calming, especially for children who are sensitive to stimuli.

Outdoor Play

Consider taking reading activities outside. Being outdoors provides a different type of sensory environment for children. The fresh air and natural light refresh the brain which is often overloaded with artificial sensory inputs. Children often have more freedom to move outside which is important to the healthy development of the sensory system.

Routines and Transitions

- What activities are you doing before and after story time?
- At what times during the day are children most receptive to story time experiences?
- Some children may need longer transition times to introduce the activity and prepare for story time experiences.

Sensory processing changes as children grow and develop. All children have unique sensory and developmental needs. Through observation and intentional planning, early childhood educators can provide story time opportunities that are inclusive and encourage children of all abilities to participate.

Sensory Story Time includes observing children throughout the daily routine, considering individual needs, allowing time and space for varied reading opportunities, and providing different options that help children engage in and enjoy story time experiences.

When to Read

Observe each child in your care, including individual temperaments, individual routines, and individual sensory processing needs.

- What are the best times of the day to engage in reading and story time experiences?
- How does each child respond to sensory input when engaging in story time experiences?

Consider reading at different times throughout the day with individual children or in small groups. Not all children will want to participate in reading experiences at the same time and children may need opportunities for story time at different times depending on the events of the day.

How to Read

- Keep reading times short. Young children are active and need time and space to move.
- Think about ways to add music and movement to story time experiences to keep children engaged.
- Allow children to participate in story time in a position that is physically comfortable to them including lying on their tummies or sitting on your lap.

STORY TIME SHOULD ALWAYS BE INTERACTIVE AND ENJOYABLE.