



## Plan and Develop a Sensory Room

Some kinship, foster, and adoptive families have a difficult time attending church services and programs. The child in their home may have experienced trauma, grief, and loss exhibited in behaviors that are difficult to manage. Having a place the child can have his or her needs met in a safe and structured environment, gives the parents an opportunity to attend, and participate in, worship services.

A Sensory Room is a specially designed room which combines a range of stimuli to help individuals develop and engage their senses. It provides opportunities for prevention and crisis de-escalation strategies. The sensory room promotes self-care/self-nurturance, resilience, and recovery. It can include lights, colors, sounds, soft play objects, and aromas, all within a safe environment that allows the person using it to explore and interact without risk. It's a place where children can come in, refocus, and calm if other areas are over-stimulating. You don't have to spend a lot of money to get started. Putting down carpet, painting the walls a calming color, and putting light fabric over the lights create a space where children will feel a change when they walk into the room. The room can include a TV that streams a live feed of the worship service and an obstacle course for full-body movement.

### **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

Think about having the whole class move to the Sensory Room if you notice a child starting to become dysregulated. This keeps one child from being isolated from peers and can also help if you are short on classroom teachers. For large group activities that can help regulate kids, look for Brain Brake videos and ideas like this one: [Easy Brain Breaks for Kids \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

### **MOBILE SENSORY KITS**

If you only have a small space to work with or it is a shared space, you can create mobile sensory reset totes for multiple ages that can move to kids if and when they need a sensory break. Group your sensory items into categories and place them in individual bins to be brought out as needed. You can use plastic dishwashing



containers or storage bins. Here are a few ideas for mobile sensory bags, but be creative, there are lots of examples on Pinterest. Ideas include fidget toys, noise-cancelling headphones, and calm-down toys.

### **SENSORY SPACE IN EVERY ROOM**

If you do not have a space for a sensory room, you may also want to consider having a “Cozy Corner” in each room. The Cozy Corner could include a large pillow or beanbag in the corner with string lights, noise-canceling headphones, books, squeeze toys, and maybe even a sensory bubble lamp.