UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR EARLY PRIMARY YEARS
EARLY PRIMARY STUDENTS WITH SENSORY ISSUES CAN SPEND SO MUCH ENERGY TRYING TO REGULATE THEMSELVES THAT THEY HAVE NO ENERGY FOR LESSONS OR ACADEMIC LEARNING

Teachers and therapists can help make the physical environment as neutral as possible

Dr. Sarah Kennedy, OTD, OTR/L
THERE ARE SEVERAL STRATEGIES THAT SCHOOLS AND CLASSROOMS CAN USE TO ADDRESS DIFFERENT SENSORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS
When looking at the environment of the classroom it is important to look to the visual, sound and smell components.
LIGHT SENSITIVITIES

- Try using natural lighting & floor lamps
- Reduce fluorescent or bright lights

Images retrieved from NYU ASD Nest Program Sensory Presentation by Dr. Sarah Kennedy OTD, OTR/L, 2019
SOUND REDUCING STRATEGIES

Furniture gliders or tennis balls on desk chairs/doors can remove distracting noises.

Large area rugs can reduce noise.
OTHER AUDITORY PROVISIONS

- Music with variable volume
- White noise machines
- Listening center
- Earplugs in loud areas
BREAK AREAS

• An area in the classroom (or school) where an individual can escape stress.

• Area should be quiet with few visual or distractions

• Activities that occur within a break area should be individualized to ensure that they regulate appropriately.
MOVEMENT BREAKS

• An activity that includes the entire class

• Promotes self-regulation

• Incorporating planned ‘movement breaks’ within lesson plans is an effective way of ‘feeding’ the students’ sensory systems and maintaining their levels of alertness
OTHER OPTIONS FOR MOVEMENT
FIDGETS

Children that:

• are continually distracted
• can’t sit in their chair
• have stress and anxiety
• can’t listen to the teacher

may benefit from fidget toys to help their bodies self-regulate, stay calm and focus.