

Sensory referencing



Sensory referencing is the use of sensory cues such as touch, smell, vision and hearing, to inform a child that something is happening (e.g. going to a particular place or activity)

To do this, we can use natural things from the environment or make cues to represent a situation.

Ideas for sensory referencing



When going shopping: Encouraging a child to feel the bars of a trolley outside the supermarket



When going to play outside: Encouraging a child to touch and smell a flower or particular plant



When going into a room:

- Spraying perfume on a scarf and encouraging a child to smell it before going into that room
- Coloured streamers over the doorway so the child can feel and see them
- Playing the same piece of music when they enter
- Using an air freshener in a room (e.g. the toilet)



For different activities: different coloured doorways, tables, floor surfaces

How to use sensory referencing

- Sensory referencing should be used either at the place where we enter or where the event is happening. We should encourage the individual to touch, smell, see and hear the cue(s) being used in that situation.
- Give verbal prompts to focus the child. E.g. 'we are going outside now. Let's smell the flower' Then take them outside.
- Use more than one cue at once to create a multi-sensory experience but be careful not to use too many otherwise it can become confusing
- Do not use the same cue for different events
- Use the same cue every time the child experiences the event