



waitingwell

with The Owl Centre **Charity**

CREATING A CALM AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT – CONSISTENCY AND PREDICTABILITY

Children need to have established, consistent routines and environments to help reduce their general anxiety as well as avoid them becoming overwhelmed by sensory sensations. All adults who come into contact with the child should be using the same approaches and have a clear understanding of the child's individual needs and sensory preferences. A child needs to be supported to understand their daily routine, they need clear visual communication supports to ensure this. Different children will have different communication needs and this should to be explored fully and if required a speech and language therapist should be consulted.

Transitions from one activity can be difficult for some children and to help make these smoother clear cues should be provided as well as gradual sequenced steps. The timing of transitions should be considered to and some children may need adjustments to support their sensory preferences.

Consider the daily routines and reduce the demands on a child when you know that they are tired.

- **Connection – Trust and empathy must be prioritised.** Children need to feel safe in the school environment. School staff need to ensure they help them to feel understood and valued. Having a key person that they know they can go to when they need is important. **Partnership and co regulation – Adults need to become knowledgeable about an individual's sensory preferences and differences so they can support them to remain regulated by encouraging them to use sensory strategies, this is known as a co regulation approach, children often do not initially understand the bodily sensations they are experiencing when they are becoming overwhelmed and dysregulated and so they will not choose to engage in a sensory strategy. Instead, the adults around them, school staff and parents need to help them develop a self-awareness of their sensory preferences and differences. Supporting sensory regulation in this way will lead to emotional regulation**
- **Total communication approach - many neurodivergent children are visual learners and so it is important to use visual strategies.**