



Charity registration number 1089224

A recreational facility for disabled children, their families, friends and schools



Sensory Room at Thomley Activity Centre

For each of us to participate in and respond to the world around us we need to use our senses. They help us to understand the environment around us, to determine what actions we take in a particular situation, and to enable us to interact with the rest of society. Many disabled children, especially those with complex disabilities or autism, have senses which are either intensified or not present at all, often referred to as sensory integration dysfunction.

For these children, Thomley's sensory room provides an engaging environment, designed to create a stimulating, yet calming and therapeutic atmosphere. Thomley's sensory room aims to provide individuals with the opportunity to stimulate, develop or balance their sensory systems.

Sensory activities for children of all ages and abilities



The interactive bubble tubes and fibre optic lights enable children to understand the concept of cause and effect whereby they can change the colour of the whole room by pressing a simple button. Children with visual impairments can follow the vivid moving colours and patterns of lights and image projectors. Children with hearing impairments can enjoy relaxing music through beanbags which gently vibrate. Children also learn to develop and balance their sensory systems through sensory panels, textured tactile toys, massage mattress and a cosy swinging chair.

Involving parents and carers

Thomley's sensory room also aims to provide a calm environment in which disabled children and their families can relax, de-stress and spend quality time together. Following positive experiences at Thomley, many families have chosen to adapt a room in their home to create a space for sensory stimulation. Wherever requested, Thomley signposts families to providers of sensory equipment or donors who may help fund sensory rooms for individuals.

Awareness raising about disability

Although sensory rooms are expensive, many everyday activities can encourage sensory integration. Thomley therefore carefully considers how sensory awareness can be built everyday activities offered to children. As examples, Thomley art and craft activities may include textured collages and aromatic play dough. Children can also feel their way around the centre assisted by means of sensory panels.

As part of its ethos, Thomley aims to share its experiences, understanding and approaches with others by welcoming visitors from the local community who, with greater understanding and acceptance of disability issues, are more able to include disabled children within their daily community activities. Thomley also shares its experiences through networking meetings, outreach play days, advising organisations within the play sector and by offering work placement experience to staff from other play setting.



"Thomley Hall has changed my life! I have a whole new view of the world! I just love coming here!" - Community user

Cost of providing a sensory room

The sensory room costs £19,469 per year to run, equivalent to £3.50 per child per visit. This covers the rent of the 40m² space and the upkeep of the lighting, sound and tactile equipment. Families donate £1 per child for the use of this room, meaning that **Thomley subsidises a further £2.50 per child to enable families to afford use of the room.**