

Activity Class Fit Checklist for Sensory Needs

BEFORE YOU BOOK

Use this side to begin with the child, ask focused questions, and record the supports or accommodations that matter most.

Activity or class _____ Provider _____ Date _____

Child / participant _____ Best way to communicate _____

1

Start with the child

Clarify what draws them in and what usually makes participation easier or harder.

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| ☐ The activity connects with something the child already enjoys or is curious about. | ☐ I know whether they prefer to watch first, join gradually, or begin right away. |
| ☐ I have considered whether a small group, individual lesson, or larger class is likely to work best. | ☐ I have identified likely pressure points such as noise, lighting, touch, crowds, smells, movement, or waiting. |
| ☐ I know how the child most comfortably receives instructions and communicates that they need help or a break. | ☐ I have considered how much energy, transition support, and recovery time the class may require. |

What are they hoping to try, learn, or enjoy?

Likely sensory pressure points

Supports that already help

2

Questions to ask the provider

Use only the questions that matter for this child and this setting.

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| ☐ How many children usually attend, and how many adults support the group? | ☐ Does the class follow a predictable routine, and can the provider explain a typical session? |
| ☐ Are instructions demonstrated, shown visually, or broken into smaller steps as well as spoken? | ☐ How are transitions, waiting periods, changes, and the end of class handled? |
| ☐ Can a child pause, observe, move, or use a quieter space without being shamed or removed? | ☐ Are headphones, visual prompts, fidgets, comfort items, communication tools, or other supports allowed when safe? |
| ☐ Is gradual participation accepted, or is every child expected to join every part immediately? | ☐ How are families told about substitute teachers, room changes, performances, or other changes? |
| ☐ How does the instructor respond when a child is overwhelmed, confused, hesitant, or unable to continue? | ☐ How can families share useful information and receive brief feedback without discussing the child publicly? |
| ☐ Can the child attend a trial, tour the room, meet the instructor, or observe before joining? | ☐ Are there safety rules that affect breaks, support items, parent presence, or alternative participation? |

Provider answers and accommodations to confirm

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DURING THE TRIAL

Treat the session as information, not an audition. Notice whether the environment and instructor make meaningful participation possible.

Activity or class _____ Provider _____ Date _____

Child / participant _____ Best way to communicate _____

3

What to notice during a trial

Look for fit, flexibility, clarity, and manageable challenge - not perfect performance.

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| ☐ The arrival process is understandable, and the child can tell where to go and what happens first. | ☐ The instructor acknowledges the child without demanding immediate speech, eye contact, or participation. |
| ☐ The noise, light, crowding, smells, temperature, touch, and movement demands are manageable or adjustable. | ☐ Instructions are clear enough for the child to understand what to do and what comes next. |
| ☐ Waiting and unstructured periods are brief, supported, or predictable enough to manage. | ☐ The child has an appropriate way to ask for help, pause, observe, or make a limited choice. |
| ☐ When the child hesitates or struggles, the instructor responds with clarity and support rather than pressure or embarrassment. | ☐ The group culture allows different skill levels and participation styles without ridicule. |
| ☐ The class offers manageable challenge without repeatedly pushing the child past their usable limit. | ☐ There are signs of interest, curiosity, connection, enjoyment, or growing comfort - even if participation is limited. |

What appeared to work?

What appeared difficult?

What could be changed or supported next time?

A difficult first session is information, not an automatic no.

Look at the child's interest, the instructor's response, recovery afterward, and whether specific supports could make another attempt more usable.

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AFTER THE CLASS

Use this side to notice delayed responses, include the child's voice, and choose a next step without turning one session into a permanent verdict.

Activity or class _____ Provider _____ Date _____
Child / participant _____ Best way to communicate _____

4

Check in after the class

The child's response later may be as important as what happened in the room.

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| ☐ The child has been offered a low-pressure way to share what they liked, disliked, or want changed. | ☐ They show interest in returning, or there is enough curiosity to try again with adjustments. |
| ☐ The recovery time afterward seems manageable for the child and the rest of the day. | ☐ I have noticed any delayed signs of overload, shutdown, anxiety, irritability, exhaustion, or physical discomfort. |
| ☐ I can name one or two specific supports that might improve the next session. | ☐ I am considering the overall pattern rather than treating one hesitant or difficult moment as the whole answer. |

What did the child say or communicate?

What did I notice later?

What would make another session easier?

Current fit - not a permanent verdict

Based on what you know today, which next step makes the most sense?

☐ Looks like a good fit

☐ Try again with supports

☐ Need more information

☐ Not the right fit now

Next step

A change of plan is not failure.

A child can genuinely like an activity while needing a different instructor, class size, pace, environment, or way to participate.

Simple use idea

Check only what matters for this child and this activity. The goal is to notice patterns, identify useful supports, and make the next step easier - not to score the child or provider.