



Serenity
Sensory
Music

CREATING SENSORY-RICH ENVIRONMENTS AT HOME

*Practical tips for parents to build music
spaces for sensory stimulation*

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Creating Sensory-Rich Environments at Home

Practical Tips for Parents to Build Music Spaces for Sensory Stimulation

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What's Inside This Booklet

This booklet is designed to guide parents, carers, grandparents, educators, and support workers through the practical steps of creating a sensory-rich music environment at home. Each chapter builds on the last, offering evidence-informed guidance alongside hands-on ideas you can try today. Whether you have a large playroom or a small corner of the living room, there is something here for every family and every budget.

The chapters move from understanding **why environment matters**, to **building your space**, **choosing the right resources**, and finally **bringing music into everyday family life**. Each section includes practical tips, checklists, and activity ideas to support you on your journey.

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Introduction

Our surroundings shape how we feel, how we behave, and how we connect with others. For children and adults with sensory processing differences, the environment can either support or hinder their ability to feel safe, regulated, and ready to engage. A sensory-rich environment is one that thoughtfully considers sight, sound, touch, movement, and space to create a place where individuals can thrive.

Music is one of the most powerful tools available to families. It can calm an anxious child, energise a tired afternoon, support communication, and create moments of genuine connection between family members. You do not need a dedicated sensory room or expensive equipment to make music a meaningful part of your home. With creativity and intention, any space can become a place of sensory exploration and joy.

Serenity Sensory Music combines therapeutic music-making with sensory support practices rooted in UK Music Therapy. This approach recognises that every family is unique, and that small, consistent changes can make a significant difference to wellbeing and connection at home.

📖 **A Note on This Booklet:** Every family is different. The ideas here are starting points, not rules. Observe what works for your child, trust your instincts, and build a space that reflects your family's unique needs and strengths.

Chapter 1: Why Environment Matters

What is a Sensory-Rich Environment?

A sensory-rich environment thoughtfully considers the sensory information present in a space. This includes lighting, sound levels, textures, colours, and the overall feeling of calm or stimulation. Such environments help individuals feel safe, regulated, and ready to engage with the world around them.

Music plays a central role in shaping this environment. Rhythmic, predictable sounds can create a sense of safety. Gentle melodies can lower stress. Familiar songs can support transitions and routines, giving children a sense of predictability in their day.

Sensory Processing and Regulation

Every person processes sensory information differently. Some individuals seek sensory input and may enjoy loud sounds, bright lights, or active movement. Others are more sensitive and may become overwhelmed by the same stimuli. Understanding your child's sensory profile is the first step towards creating a supportive home environment.

When the environment feels overwhelming, we may see changes in behaviour, mood, communication, or engagement. A child who covers their ears, becomes withdrawn, or has a meltdown may be communicating that their environment is too much for them. Music, used thoughtfully, can help restore balance.

Signs Your Environment May Be Too Stimulating

Physical Responses

Covering ears, squinting at lights, avoiding certain textures, or becoming physically restless or tense

Emotional Responses

Increased anxiety, irritability, tearfulness, or sudden changes in mood without an obvious trigger

Behavioural Responses

Withdrawing from activities, avoiding certain rooms, difficulty concentrating, or increased challenging behaviour

Communication Changes

Becoming quieter, using fewer words, or struggling to follow instructions in certain environments



Key Takeaway: Observe your child's responses to different environments. Small adjustments to lighting, sound, and space can make a meaningful difference to their comfort and engagement.

Chapter 2: Building a Sensory Music Space

You do not need a large room or a big budget to create a meaningful sensory music space. A quiet corner of the living room, a section of a bedroom, or even a designated basket of instruments can serve as a starting point. The goal is to create a space that feels calm, inviting, and accessible for your child.



Choosing Your Location

Select a quiet area away from high-traffic zones. Consider natural light, soft furnishings, and whether the space can be partially enclosed to feel safe and contained.



Storage and Organisation

Use low, open shelving or labelled baskets so children can access instruments independently. Visual organisation reduces anxiety and supports autonomy.



Lighting and Comfort

Avoid harsh overhead lights. Use lamps, fairy lights, or projectors to create a softer atmosphere. Add comfortable seating such as floor cushions, beanbags, or a small sofa.

Budget-Friendly Ideas

- Use a dedicated basket or box for instruments
- Repurpose a quiet cupboard or alcove
- Use scarves and ribbons from home
- Create a playlist on a phone or tablet
- Use soft blankets and cushions you already own
- Make simple instruments from household items

Five Essentials for a Sensory Music Corner

1. A comfortable, contained seating area
2. Soft, adjustable lighting
3. A small selection of accessible instruments
4. Visual calm: minimal clutter, soothing colours
5. A dedicated music player or playlist source

Chapter 3: Choosing Music and Sensory Resources

Selecting the right music and sensory resources is about understanding your child's preferences and needs. Some children respond beautifully to gentle, rhythmic sounds. Others may prefer more active, energetic music. The key is to offer variety and observe what brings calm, joy, or engagement.

Calming Music

Slow tempos, gentle melodies, and predictable rhythms. Ideal for wind-down routines, rest time, or moments of anxiety. Consider classical pieces, nature sounds, or gentle lullabies.

Energising Music

Upbeat tempos and rhythmic patterns that encourage movement and engagement. Useful for morning routines, active play, or lifting mood. Consider children's songs or world music with strong percussion.

Personalised Playlists

Create playlists for different times of day or emotional states. Familiar songs provide predictability and comfort. Include songs that are meaningful to your child and your family.

Recommended Starter Resources

Age Group	Instruments	Sensory Additions
Babies and Toddlers	Soft shakers, chime bars, small drums	Textured scarves, soft lights, gentle lullabies
Young Children (3 to 7)	Tambourines, egg shakers, xylophones	Coloured ribbons, bubbles, movement scarves
Older Children (8+)	Hand drums, tuning forks, simple keyboards	Headphones, personalised playlists, lyric books

📌 Sound Sensitivity: For children who are sensitive to sound, start with very quiet instruments and low-volume music. Offer headphones as an option. Allow the child to control the volume wherever possible, as this supports a sense of safety and agency.

Chapter 4: Everyday Activities for Connection and Regulation

Music does not need to be a formal activity to be meaningful. Simple, everyday musical moments can support regulation, connection, and joy. The activities below are designed to fit naturally into busy family life, requiring minimal preparation and no special expertise.



Morning Music Routines

Start the day with a familiar song or gentle playlist. Singing together during breakfast or while getting ready creates predictability and a positive emotional start to the day.



Musical Storytelling

Add sound effects or simple instruments to story time. Shake an egg shaker for rain, tap a drum for footsteps, or use a chime for magical moments. This deepens engagement and supports imagination.



Wind-Down Sessions

Use slow, calming music in the evening to signal that the day is ending. Combine with dimmed lights, soft textures, and quiet instrument exploration to support the transition to sleep.



Movement and Dance

Put on music and move together. Use scarves or ribbons to extend movement. Follow your child's lead: some children prefer gentle swaying, others enjoy jumping and spinning.

Five-Minute Musical Activities

- Shake and stop: play music, freeze when it stops
- Copycat rhythms: tap a pattern, child repeats it
- Sing a familiar song with different voices
- Play instruments along to a favourite song
- Breathe slowly while listening to calm music

Top Tips for Parents and Carers

- Follow your child's lead rather than directing play
- Keep sessions short and positive
- Repeat familiar activities to build confidence
- Notice what calms or energises your child
- Celebrate all participation, however small

Activities in Practice: Try This

These structured activities combine sensory exploration with music-making. They are designed to be flexible, so adapt them to suit your child's age, interests, and sensory preferences. Each activity can be completed in just a few minutes and requires minimal preparation.

1

Sensory Sound Bottles

Fill small bottles or containers with different materials: rice, lentils, beads, or bells. Shake them gently and listen to the different sounds. Talk about which sounds are loud, quiet, soft, or sharp. This supports auditory discrimination and sensory exploration.

2

Music and Mindfulness

Play a piece of calm, instrumental music. Invite your child to lie down or sit comfortably. Ask them to close their eyes and notice what they hear. After the music ends, talk about what they noticed. This supports self-awareness and emotional regulation.

3

Family Jam Session

Gather simple instruments and play together for five minutes. There are no right or wrong sounds. Follow your child's lead, mirror their rhythms, and enjoy the shared experience. This builds connection and supports turn-taking and communication.

4

Transition Songs

Create or choose a specific song for transitions: tidying up, leaving the house, or getting ready for bed. Consistent musical cues help children anticipate what is coming next, reducing anxiety and supporting cooperation.



Reflection Question: Think about a time when music has helped your child feel calm or happy. What was the song? What was happening around them? Use this memory as a starting point for building your sensory music space.

Checklists and Quick Reference

Use these checklists as a quick reference when setting up your sensory music space or planning activities. They are designed to be practical and easy to use, even on busy days.

Setting Up Your Space

- Choose a quiet, low-traffic location
- Add soft, comfortable seating
- Use gentle, adjustable lighting
- Keep instruments accessible on low shelves
- Reduce visual clutter in the area
- Have a music player or playlist ready
- Add familiar, comforting textures

Daily Music Moments

- Morning: a familiar welcome song
- Mealtimes: calm background music
- Transitions: a consistent transition song
- Play time: instrument exploration
- Wind-down: gentle, slow music
- Bedtime: a consistent lullaby or playlist

Signs It Is Working

- Your child seeks out the space independently
- They appear calmer after music activities
- Transitions feel smoother
- You notice moments of connection and joy

5

Minutes Is Enough

Short, consistent musical moments are more valuable than occasional long sessions

1

Space Is All You Need

A single corner or basket can become a meaningful sensory music area

100%

Your Family's Approach

There is no single right way. Your approach should reflect your family's unique needs

Conclusion: Creating a Home Filled with Calm and Creativity

"Music has the power to reach children in ways that words alone cannot. When we create spaces for sensory exploration and musical connection at home, we are giving our children a gift that lasts a lifetime: the feeling of being safe, understood, and loved."

Laura Seymour, Serenity Sensory Music

Creating a sensory-rich music environment at home does not require perfection, expensive equipment, or a dedicated room. It requires curiosity, warmth, and a willingness to follow your child's lead. Start small. Observe what brings your child calm, joy, or engagement. Build on what works, and let go of what does not.

Every family's journey is different. What matters most is the connection you build through shared musical experiences, the sense of safety you create through predictable routines, and the joy that comes from exploring sound and movement together. Your home, with all its imperfections, is already the best place for your child to grow, explore, and thrive.

Start Small

One corner, one playlist, one instrument. Small steps create lasting change.

Observe and Adapt

Watch what your child responds to. Their reactions are your best guide.

Celebrate Connection

Every shared musical moment is meaningful, however brief or imperfect.



Thank You for Reading. We hope this booklet has inspired you to create meaningful sensory music experiences within your own home. For more resources, workshops, and support, visit www.serenitysensorymusic.co.uk