

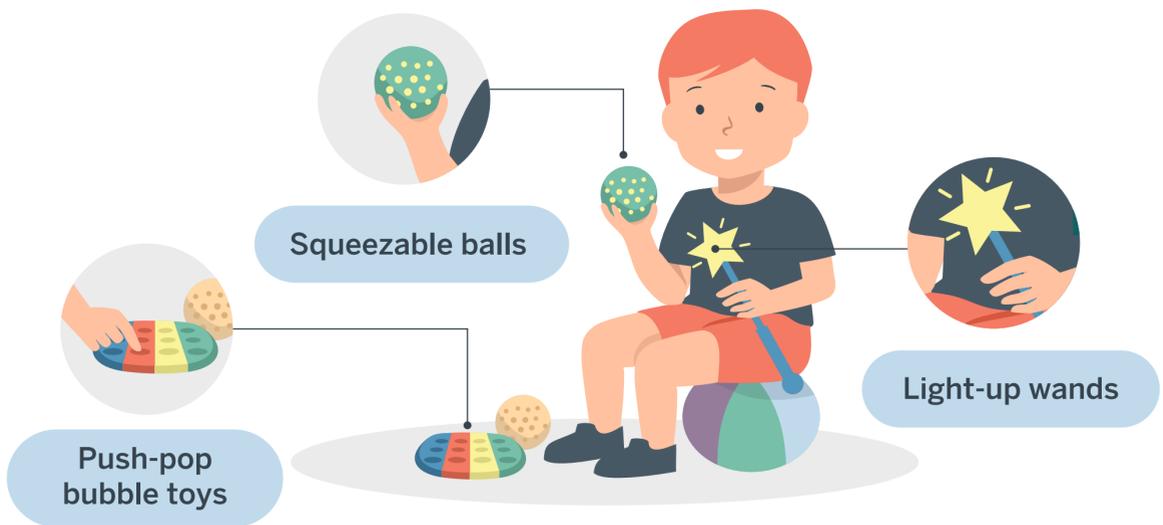
SELECTING THE BEST SENSORY MATERIALS TO SUPPORT YOUR AUTISM EVALUATIONS*



Practitioners often use sensory materials during autism evaluations to build rapport and offer opportunities for those being assessed to show their strengths. Using sensory objects can lower social communication demands, support a child's sensory entry point, and foster connection through play.

1 USE OBJECTS TO CENTER THE CHILD

Offer a few different sensory materials and allow the child to explore them through object-focused play with the evaluator. Sharing the child's perspective clarifies their strengths and builds connection with the practitioner.



Use objects that have visual, tactile, movement, and cause-and-effect properties. Prioritize following the child's lead over making social communication demands on the child.

2 SUPPORT EXPLORATION AND PREFERENCE

Look for patterns in the way the child creates and maintains routines with their preferred sensory objects.



3 SHOWCASE THE CHILD'S STRENGTHS AND ABILITIES

Choose materials with properties that encourage conversation. Remember: Invitations for the verbally fluent child to talk about their areas of preferred interest is part of the sensory entry point.



Whether a child is using spoken language or another form of communication, using sensory-based materials, puzzles, objects, and toys minimizes demands on the child and importantly, allows opportunities for connection, movement, and energizing play. When adults respect a neurodivergent child's perspective, their strengths and abilities can be revealed.

*Source: Marilyn J. Monteiro, PhD, author of the Monteiro Interview Guidelines for Diagnosing the Autism Spectrum, Second Edition (MIGDAS™-2)

The CDC says evaluation includes a thorough review of how a child plays, learns, communicates, acts, and moves. Sensory toys give crucial insight. Read more here:

