



# Identifying Sensory-Friendly Events for Families with Children with Sensory Processing Dysfunctions in the Atlanta, Georgia Area.

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## Introduction

One in six children experience sensory processing issues or disorders (Kong & Moreno, 2018). The prevalence of sensory processing issues can be as high as 80% to 100% in highly affected populations, such as in children with Autism or other developmental and intellectual disorders (Kong & Moreno, 2018).

Families that have children with sensory processing issues or dysfunctions are often faced with significant challenges in leisure, play, and social participation (Koenig & Rudney, 2010). Often, these families must prepare differently for community outings or avoid community outings altogether due to inability to participate in typical community event offerings secondary to their child's sensory processing limitations.

The use of sensory-friendly zones is a necessary step toward participation (Clément, et al., 2022).

Sensory-friendly events and spaces should allow the children and families to participate in their community without causing emotional, mental, or physical harm. Spaces that are sensory-friendly allow for families with children who have sensory processing issues to access their community to the best of their ability.

Currently, there is not a list of sensory-friendly events that is accurate and available for the Atlanta, Georgia community.

## Results

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Score
Center for Puppetry Arts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Cherokee History Museum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Sloomoo Institute	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	3.33
Southern Museum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	4
Studio Movie Grill	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	3
Georgia Ballet	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	3.33
High Museum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	4.33
Fox Theater	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	3
Lekotec of Georgia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	4.67
Tellus Museum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	4
Chuck E. Cheese Kennesaw	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	3

## Discussion continued

### Future Suggestions

Future research would benefit from examining the participation at sensory-friendly events. This research would increase our understand of why some of the sensory-friendly events are not as successful by participation measurements compared to others.

It would also be beneficial for future research to examine the relationship between use of sensory-friendly events and a specific diagnosis such as autism spectrum disorder or attention deficit disorder.

This further research could increase our understanding of the benefits and drawbacks of sensory-friendly events for certain populations. Which would help curate the sensory-friendly events to the population of interest.

## Conclusion

Provided to the caregivers of BLPTC at the conclusion of this project is the list of sites evaluated with all relevant information that the caregiver would need to decide if the site is suitable for their family's participation.

This project was successful in fulfilling its purpose of creating a list of sensory-friendly events for BLPTC caregivers to utilize and will hopefully increase BLPTC families' community participation.

## Methods

The purpose of this project is to create a list of sensory-friendly events and spaces for families in the Atlanta area to increase the awareness of the availability of sensory-friendly events.

This project was requested by Beyond Limits Pediatric Therapy Center (BLPTC) in Acworth Georgia to support their clients in their efforts to increase community participation for children and their families. This clinic saw first-hand how difficult it was to identify the sensory-friendly events that are offered in the area, due to lack of a sensory-friendly events list for clients to utilize.

The OTS created the list by visiting and evaluating the quality of the event sites using a sensory-friendly checklist as the evaluation criteria. The OTS created the criteria by researching and collaborating with the site mentor who is a registered OTP and through discussion with parents of children with sensory processing issues. The events will be rated on a 5-point scale based on the 15 yes/no questions.

### Sensory Friendly Checklist Criterion:

- Is the sound below 75 decibels?
- Is the lighting below 500 lux?
- Is the capacity of the event limited by at least 25%?
- Are smells or aromas minimal to not present?
- Will the sound and lights be consistent during the event (no strobe lights, blinking lights, or frequent and unexpected changes, etc.)?
- Are noise cancelling headphones available?
- Are fidgets available?
- Is movement permitted during the event?
- Is talking or sounds allowed during the event?
- Are outside foods allowed?
- Are outside drinks allowed?
- Does the event include opportunities for tactical play/activities?
- Is the schedule for the event provided?
- Are social stories provided?
- Is there a quiet space(s) available if needed?

## Discussion

### Implications

The results indicate that there are several sensory-friendly events in the metro Atlanta area for the BLPTC children, caregivers, and their families to participate in.

BLPTC is an outpatient pediatric therapy center that provides speech, physical, and occupational therapy. This site provides therapy to children of various diagnosis such as autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit disorder, and sensory processing dysfunctions. Therefore, the clients at BLPTC often have sensory needs and would benefit from sensory-friendly events

This project hopes to support the multidisciplinary team at BLPTC in their pursuits to increase community, social, family, and peer participation for their clients.

### Limitations

This project did not evaluate if sites will make appropriate changes based on the OTS suggestions.

The evaluation instrument: sensory-friendly checklist criterion, is not a validated measurement.

This project is not research based, therefore there is not an initial hypothesis and there are not outcome measures.

Despite these limitations, the project was successful in reaching its goal, and further research in related areas can be used to supplement this project.

## References

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## Acknowledgement & Contact information

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