



Fundraising Ideas to Finance your Sensory Space



Welcome!

A Sensory Space can open up a whole new world for individuals with physical or cognitive impairments. Schools and centers that work with these individuals can provide great therapeutic benefits to all of their students and clients by offering them a multi-sensory experience.



Sensory Spaces can be used to achieve hundreds of individual goals. Examples include:

- Increasing concentration and focus
- Providing mental and physical relaxation
- Decreasing aggressive behaviors
- Developing the senses of sight, touch and hearing
- Teaching cause and effect
- Providing a sense of security and calmness
- Encouraging vocalization and communication
- Promoting social interactions
- Heightening awareness of the environment
- Improving coordination and gross motor skills
- Providing an opportunity to explore freely
- Promoting cognitive development

You know the benefits of a Sensory Space, so how do you go about creating and funding one? We've put together this packet to give you lots of ideas to get you going!

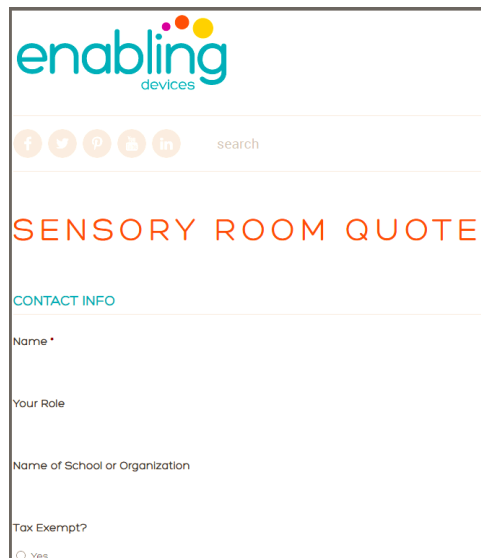
Get Organized!

So you've decided to add a Sensory Space to your school or center. Now what?

First step is to **Assemble Your Sensory Team**—who should be a member? The team should include the various stakeholders—administrators, teachers, therapists, and parents. All fundraising projects need enthusiastic cheerleaders so select people whose energy attract others to the effort!

Next is to **Identify Your Needs and Goals**. Enabling Devices has a Sensory Room Design Questionnaire that will help you to organize and refine the needs and goals for your Sensory Space. Fill out the questionnaire here:

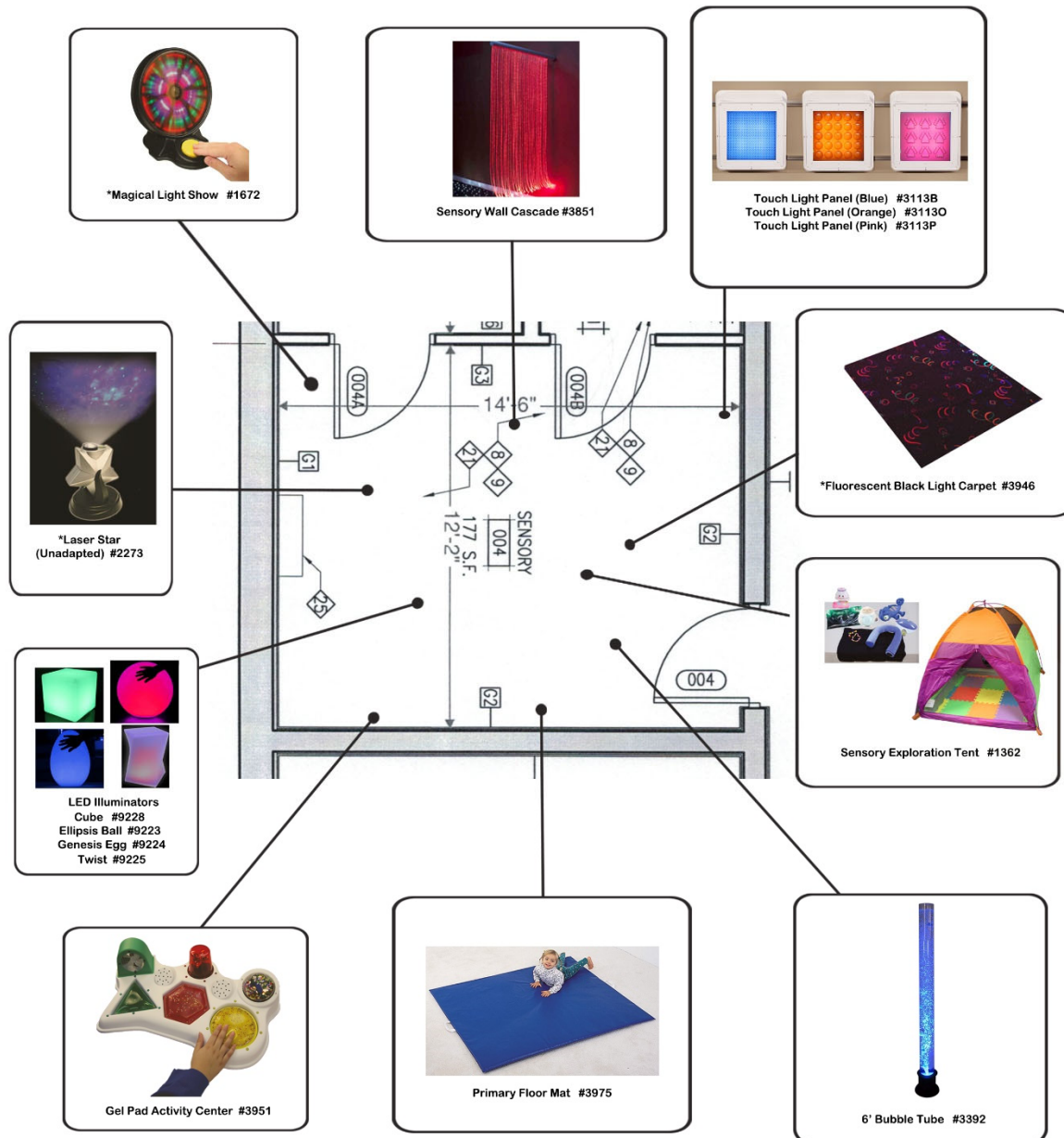
<https://enablingdevices.com/sensory-room-quote/>



The image shows a screenshot of a web form titled "SENSORY ROOM QUOTE" from Enabling Devices. The form includes a header with the Enabling Devices logo, social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, and LinkedIn, and a search bar. Below the title, there is a section labeled "CONTACT INFO" with the following fields: "Name *", "Your Role", "Name of School or Organization", and "Tax Exempt?" with a radio button for "Yes".

Once you've identified your needs and goals, it's time to put together a **Budget and Time Frame**. Enabling Devices can assist you with estimating a budget. Once you've completed our questionnaire, we can design a room for you and create one or more quotes based upon that design. Of course, we will work with you and make any adjustments to the design as you wish.

Sample Design



Next Step – Paying for It!



You've created your team, you've identified your goals, and created a budget and time frame for your Sensory Space. The following pages will discuss various ways to raise the funds needed. You can mix and match various ideas and also create stages for building out your Sensory Space.

Grants

Foundations

Hundreds of foundations exist that support the special needs community, both nationally and at the state and local level. Some even focus on helping to build Sensory facilities – for example, take a look at The Christopher Douglas Hidden Angel Foundation (www.cdhaf.org).

Research is necessary to find the right foundation for your facility based upon location, your needs, and grant requirements. Working your way through the Steps listed on pages 3-4 of this brochure will help you focus on your needs, budget and timing when applying for a grant.

Here is a sampling of foundations that support *special needs organizations*:

Different Needz Foundation provides grants for special needs individuals, families and organizations to purchase therapy devices, adaptive toys, etc. The Foundation was reevaluating its grant strategy in 2020 but organizations should check and see the status of grants. www.differentneedzfoundation.org

Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism funds community organizations and schools who are providing vital resources and actively assisting children with autism spectrum disorder and their families through education and technology...and other opportunities that will enhance the quality of life for those affected. States: New England, NY, NJ, So CA, FL. www.flutiefoundation.org

Innovating Worth Projects Foundation makes grants to organizations dedicated to developing innovative programs, disseminating ideas, or providing direct care or services for children with special needs, acute illnesses or chronic disabilities. www.iwpcf.org

Here is a sampling of foundations that support *families with special needs children*:

Fund It Forward helps families of special needs children obtain needed equipment including sensory products. www.funditfwd.org

Snap4Kids is a special needs assistance program that provides modest grants for medical and therapeutic equipment. www.snap4kids.org

Interactive Technology Assisting Autistic Little Kids lists hundreds of foundations that provide grants to families of special needs children.
www.itaalk.org/#!grants/cpcs

Joshua Harr Shane Foundation supports special needs families by providing funding for necessary special needs equipment, special needs schooling, special needs sports, and activities both in and out of school.
<https://joshuaharrshane.org/special-needs/>

Autism Care Today grants are designed to provide access to individuals and families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders. Grant payments will be made directly to pre-approved treatment providers, assessors or materials vendors.
<https://www.act-today.org/apply-for-grant/>

Local Businesses



Contact local businesses and ask for their assistance. Request a donation or suggest they sponsor a particular product for your Sensory Space. Companies like to do this because they see what they are buying and it makes it easier for them to write a press release and get publicity for their donation.

Crowdfunding



Crowdfunding is a way of funding a project by encouraging a large number of supporters to each contribute a relatively small amount of money using the help of a website.

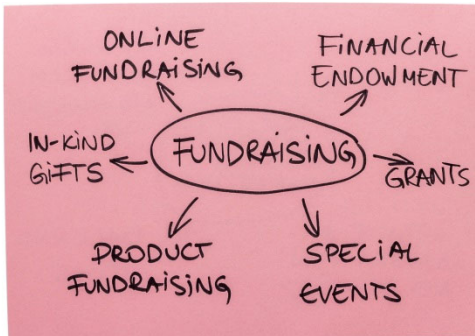
According to [statistica.com](https://www.statista.com), crowdfunding services are anticipated to raise more than \$482M in 2020 in the U.S. and will grow to more than \$567M by 2024. The average amount raised will be nearly \$7,000 in 2020, as well.

In recent years, as school budgets have tightened and programs have been cut, schools and other non-profit organizations have been successfully raising money through crowdfunding.

There are many crowdfunding sites out there, such as GoFundMe, DonorsChoose, and ClassWish. As you review your options, pay close attention to each site's fee structure. You want to get the most you can for your project!

Crowdfunding success is much more about you market your project to potential donors than which platform you use. Crowdfunding takes work: writing a project description and telling your story, identifying perks for contributing, and launching the campaign. The sites generally do a good job of walking you through the steps.

School Fundraising Ideas



Overview

There are thousands of great school fundraising ideas. However, it is important that you choose the ones that are right for your school or center.

First of all, you need to start with a plan. Know your budget and then target your fundraising to the amount of money you need. Limit major fundraisers to one or two per year.

Secondly, evaluate your resources. How many people are available to work on your fundraiser and how quickly do you need to raise funds? An elaborate charity ball will require several dedicated people and weeks, if not months, to prepare.

Next is to talk to as many interested people as possible to find out what types of sales or events they think your staff, parents and community will support. Research what has been done in the past. You may uncover a long-forgotten tradition that could be revived. You may also discover failures that should be avoided.

Ideas

Basically there are two major fundraising types—selling products and organizing an event. The event can be as simple as a Bingo night or as complicated as an auction gala. Only you can decide which is right for your school/center.

Sales

- Bake Sale – Parents, students and staff contribute baked goods for a one day sale.
- Flower or Bulb Sale – Sell in early Spring to families and community.
- Holiday Wreaths – Sell in November to families and community.
- Raffle – Sells tickets for a chance to win a (donated) prize or do a 50/50 draw for cash.
- T-Shirts – Design with school logo or artwork by students.



Events



Solicit sponsors for your events – in return for a specific donation, offer the sponsors an opportunity to prominently advertise at your event. Consider various levels of sponsorship with increasingly larger benefits.

- Garage Sale – families and community members buy a booth to sell their “used” items.
- Bingo Night – participants pay to play with small prizes for winners.
- Fun Run or Walk – include students who raise pledges. Make it fun with music, snacks, and balloons.
- Wine Tasting – partner with a wine distributor who will bring wines for sampling and purchasing. School gets a percentage of the sales. Combine this with an auction (see next bullet point) and raffle to raise more money.
- Silent Auction – Combine various donated goods and services into attractive packages. Participants put down their name and offer price for items they are interested in.
- Restaurant Night – A night is selected and school community members are invited to eat at the restaurant during a set time period, such as between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. The restaurant agrees to donate a percentage of the proceeds generated.



Marketing Your Fundraising

Now that you've decided what fundraising ideas to pursue, it's time to create a marketing plan to publicize your fundraisers. Whether you decide on one, two or all the ideas in this brochure, the fundraising should be done within a distinct period of time to create a sense of urgency (e.g., two or three months).



Assign members of your Sensory Room committee to various marketing tasks:

1) Create marketing materials for distribution:

- A colorful one-page description of your Sensory Room and its purpose that can be used as handouts at all school events
- A press release about your efforts to fund and build a Sensory Room
- Photos of either your school/center and its students and/or an prototype image of a sensory space
- A short video highlighting your school/center and its students and why a sensory room would benefit all

2) Brainstorm about a social network—make a list of target audiences and identify key members of those audiences and ask them to reach out to others (e.g., ask PTA members to contact parents).

3) Advertise your fundraising – When your fundraising kick-off date is nearing, advertise in all these venues to create momentum.

- Create large eye-catching materials for displaying in several public spaces at the school/center.
- Get in touch with your local paper and radio and TV stations – send your press release, photos and video.
- Connect with all your social networks. Ask all stakeholders to use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social networking sites.



We Are Here to Help!



We hope this fundraising guide has been of use to you and your fundraising efforts. As you can see, there are thousands of ways to raise money, and the more ideas you generate, the more the donations you can expect to receive.

Please let us know if we can help you with photographs, quotes, budgets, layout suggestions, and more.

We'd love to receive images from your fundraising efforts and sensory rooms. We will add them to our website and social media pages to expand your exposure.

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