



Sonshine Club's successful Sensory Toy and Equipment Library has helped, and is continuing to help, many children with disabilities and their families on a regular basis, giving them access to sensory toys and equipment that they cannot afford themselves. With the aid of specialist equipment, including sensory swings, bubble tubes, binni sofas, puzzles and more, our borrowers are calmer, happier and developing better. This can be seen clearly in the case studies.

Case study 2 on next page

Case study one

Mrs L approached Sonshine Club in desperation. Her son, M, who had always displayed challenging behaviour had taken a significant turn for the worse after being stuck at home for many long lockdown months. He had become even more difficult to live with. His emotions were totally irregulated leading to numerous meltdowns during which he would violently hit, kick and hurl items at those around him, in addition to screaming, threatening and waving his fists in the air. This was happening with increasing frequency every single day and Mrs L, who was trying to help M, and at the same time protect and nurture her other children was at her wit's end.

"I'm totally stuck," she said to her contact at Sonshine Club, a deep despair evident in her voice. "Is it even possible to get him out of this?"

The contact validated her difficulties, thought for a moment, then suggested one of the items in Sonshine Club's specialist toy and equipment library. The 'Binni Sofa' – a wearable bean bag, designed to provide comfort and soft pressure for children with sensory processing challenges. "Try this," she said, "its success is not guaranteed, but see if it helps." She sorted the paperwork quickly, and Mrs L took the binni sofa home.

Mrs L called the next day, her voice tinged with excitement. "You'll never believe it," she exclaimed. "I put it on him and he's a different child." As soon as M. was wearing the bean bag, the kicking and screaming stopped. He was more at peace with himself than he had been for a long while. The comfort and pressure of the bean bag helped with his sensory processing and calmed his emotional overload.

Mrs L is now keeping the binni sofa for a little longer to help her child continue to regulate his emotions, and revert back to his pre-crisis self. Any time he displays signs of being emotionally agitated, she doesn't wait for the meltdown to start. She helps him climb into the bean bag, and he relaxes. Crisis averted. Every time.

"Your library saved my life," she tells Sonshine Club. "M. is calmer,

Sensory toy & equipment library



Case study one continued

and his siblings' tension has gone down ten notches too." She is looking forward to borrowing more sensory items to help her son in the future. "These are not things I could afford to buy myself," she says. "But having the bean bag has helped M more than I could have dreamed, and I hope that the other items in the library will help him in his development too."

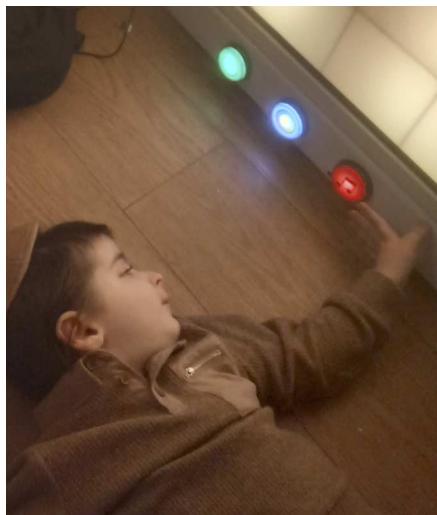
Case study two



Mrs F approached Sonshine Club just before school holidays. She shared that her son thrives on routine; his difficulties with holidays are evident through his extra challenging behaviour at those times.

Mrs F wanted to know if Sonshine Club had any ideas to help the forthcoming break from school be a calmer one for her son and subsequently for the rest of her family. A Sonshine Club volunteer showed her some of the sensory toys in the library, pointing out those she thought would be most suitable. Eventually, Mrs F settled on the sound to sight showtime, in the hope it would help her son in his sensory development and keep him happily occupied at the same time.

Sonshine Club didn't hear from her over the holidays, but when she came to return the item, she waxed poetic about the difference it had made to the otherwise unstructured days. Her son who would normally be turning the house upside down in his boredom had been kept busy for hours. There had still been difficult moments, but the tension levels in the house had been considerably lower than previous holidays.



When asked if she could see any developmental progress as a result of using this item, she hesitated. "It's hard to say," she said. "His development is always slow and it's hard to know what causes each bit of improvement. But he spent so much time with it, it must have helped him with sensory stuff even if I can't see it clearly." Then she added, "It made him so much calmer, and that itself is good for his development."

Above: examples of equipment in use.