

Snoezelen room

The word Snoezelen is a contraction of two Dutch words for "Sniffing and Dozing". The Snoezelen concept was started at the Haarendael Community for adults with Special Needs in Holland. Now almost every special school in the UK has created their own Snoezelen Room built to their own specifications and needs.

The idea is to have a special environment designed to encourage a sense of well being, equal partnership, fun, relaxation, communication, learning and especially the enhancement and awareness of the residual senses.

There are Snoezelen rooms which are mainly passive (the emphasis being on relaxation). There are others which are fully interactive (the children access switches in order to make the equipment function).

At Woodside the Snoezelen room has been created as a combination of the two. It aims for a flexible baseline which parents and staff can adapt according to individual need.

Why do we have a Snoezelen?

It offers a safe haven where adults as well as children are more relaxed. Adults tend to be less distracted and focus more carefully on the individual child and their sensory and emotional needs,

It is a defined area which all centre users respect. Adults are careful not to interrupt and distractions are kept to a minimum.

There are no right or wrong answers in the Snoezelen. Every child and adult can succeed and leave the room with a sense of well being.

It is an environment which families, friends and staff all contribute to by making mobiles, donating materials, sharing ideas. It is a constantly evolving area which has real love and care given to it.

It is a room which can offer high levels of visual contrast.

Many of the children using the Centre have only light/dark perceptions, or are at the early stages of visual awareness. The room can offer one light source at a time, the rest of the room is darkened encouraging the possibility for using vision that other conditions cannot give.

The Snoezelen also benefits the children who have a hearing loss. There is equipment which requires the children to make a vocalisation before the light source will move. There is a Soundbed which transfers music to vibration.

The room is designed to encourage maximum mobility. Care is taken to ensure that there are no hard edges on the floor so that the children can be helped to move from one area to the other gaining as much tactile information as possible in the greatest possible safety.

The interactive nature of our Snoezelen

The Snoezelen has been carefully designed so that the majority of equipment is available through an individual switching system. The bubble tube can be activated by the slightest touch on the jelly bean switch, the mirror ball by a wobble switch and the fibre optics by a wrist activated tilt switch. The switching system is carefully protected by a power breaker system.

The inter-active nature of our Snoezelen offers children choice, motivation and a real sense of achievement and reward.