Sensory & Environmental Audit Checklist

A 15-minute walk-through to find small changes that prevent problem behavior.

How to use it: Walk your room when students aren't there, then again during a busy part of the day. Check each item that's already true in the **Today** column. Anything left unchecked is an idea, not a failure.

Two weeks after you make your changes, walk the room again and fill in the **Re-check** column to see what improved.

Classroom	Date	Time of day	Re-check date

1 · Physical space and seating

Item	Today	Re-check
Students who need extra support sit near where I teach most often.	☐	☐
Students who are easily distracted sit away from the door, windows, sink, and pencil sharpener.	☐	☐
Walkways are clear, so students can move without bumping into others.	☐	☐
Each area of the room has one clear purpose (group work, quiet work, materials).	☐	☐
Students know where to put their things, and there's room to do it.	☐	☐
I can see every student from where I usually stand.	☐	☐
There's a calm space a student can use to take a break.	☐	☐
Seating options exist for students who need to move (a wobble seat, a standing spot).	☐	☐

2 · Sensory load

Sound

Item	Today	Re-check
Background noise (hallway, fans, heating) is low enough to hear quiet voices.	☐	☐
There's a quieter spot or headphones available for students who need them.	☐	☐
I use a consistent, calm signal for attention rather than raising my voice.	☐	☐

Light

Item	Today	Re-check
Lights don't flicker or buzz.	☐	☐
Glare doesn't hit screens or the board.	☐	☐
Natural light is used where possible, with a way to dim it.	☐	☐

What students see

Item	Today	Re-check
The wall behind where I teach is mostly clear.	☐	☐
Displays are organized and relevant, not covering every surface.	☐	☐
Materials not in use are stored out of sight.	☐	☐

Comfort

Item	Today	Re-check
The room temperature is comfortable.	☐	☐
Strong smells (cleaners, air fresheners) are kept to a minimum.	☐	☐

Quick tip: Stand in each corner of the room for one minute. Notice sound, light, smell, and temperature from a student's point of view.

3 · Routines, transitions, and expectations

Expectations

Item	Today	Re-check
Rules are posted, stated positively (“Walk” rather than “Don't run”), and limited to 3 to 5.	☐	☐
Each routine (arrival, independent work, group work, dismissal) has its own clear expectations.	☐	☐
Expectations have been taught and practiced, not just posted.	☐	☐
I praise students specifically when they meet expectations (“You started right away”).	☐	☐

Schedule and transitions

Item	Today	Re-check
The day's schedule is posted where students can see it.	☐	☐
Changes to the schedule are announced ahead of time.	☐	☐
I give a warning before each transition (for example, two minutes).	☐	☐
A visual timer or countdown is available.	☐	☐
Students who find transitions hard have a “first, then” card or visual schedule.	☐	☐
Lining up and moving between areas follows the same routine each time.	☐	☐

Quick tip: Many problems happen in the gaps between activities. A two-minute warning and a “first, then” card make transitions predictable.

4 · Tasks and materials

Item	Today	Re-check
Directions are short, given one step at a time, and shown as well as said.	☐	☐
Students can start the first item on their own.	☐	☐
Long tasks are broken into smaller chunks.	☐	☐
Students get choices when possible (order, materials, where to work).	☐	☐
Students know how to ask for help or a break.	☐	☐
Materials are ready before the lesson starts, so there's no waiting time.	☐	☐
Easier and harder tasks are mixed, so students build momentum.	☐	☐

My next steps

What's already working well:

One or two changes I'll try this week:

Students I'll watch to see if it helps:

What changed at the re-check:

Still concerned about a student? Talk with your school team about a functional behavior assessment (FBA), which finds out what a behavior is doing for that student.

This checklist is for general education and doesn't replace an individualized assessment. Created by Felicia Burgess, MS, BCBA, LABA. ABA Breakdown is independent and not affiliated with the BACB. Free to print and share for classroom use.