SENSORY solutions™

Riley the Brave's SENSATIONAL SENSES

Mini Lesson Ideas



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tips for use

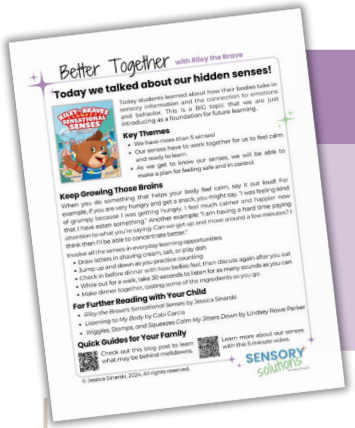
ASCA standards:
- M 2
- B-LS 2
- B-SMS 2

Mini lesson ideas for various ages using the book *Riley the Brave's Sensational Senses.*

These lessons are made to work for the whole class, small groups, or one-on-one. As you plan, think of the varied and individual student needs.

Remember, chronological age and developmental age may be different. Use the lesson that works best for your students.

Feel free to incorporate questions from ***Riley the Brave's Sensational Senses* Discussion Guide**.


Better Together with Riley the Brave

Today we talked about our hidden senses!

Today students learned about how their bodies take in sensory information and the connection to emotions and behavior. This is a BIG topic that we are just introducing as a foundation for future learning.

Key Themes
- We have more than 5 senses!
- Our senses have to work together for us to feel calm and ready to learn.
- As we get to know our senses, we will be able to make a plan for feeling safe and in control.

Keep Growing Those Brains

When you do something that helps your body feel calm, say it out loud! For example, if you are very hungry and get a snack, you might say "I was feeling kind of grumpy because I was getting hungry. I feel much calmer and happier now that I have eaten something." Another example: "I am having a hard time paying attention to what you're saying. Can we get up and move around a few minutes? I think then I'll be able to concentrate better."

Involve all the senses in everyday learning opportunities:
- Draw letters in shaving cream, salt, or play doh.
- Jump up and down as you practice counting.
- Chick in before dinner with how bellies feel, then discuss again after you eat.
- While out for a walk, take 30 seconds to listen for as many sounds as you can.
- Make dinner together, tasting some of the ingredients as you go.

For Further Reading with Your Child
- Riley the Brave's Sensational Senses by Jessica Sinarski
- Listening to My Body by Cala Garcia
- Wiggles, Stomps, and Squeezes Calm My Jitters Down by Lindsey Rowe Parker

Quick Guides for Your Family

Check out this blog post to learn what may be behind meltdowns.

Learn more about our senses with this 5-minute video.

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Building Bridges

To help parents and guardians support sensory needs outside the classroom, send **Better Together with Riley the Brave** home with each child.

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Pre-K Mini Lesson Ideas

Read *Riley the Brave's Sensational Senses* together, but remember, not all students will have the attention span to read the whole book. Feel free to skip some of the words, summarize as you read, or read little bits over the course of several days.

Alternatively, choose a few pages of the book to look at together.

- Kids this age tend to engage well with the "On the school bus..." page. Use it to discuss what they notice when they are in a car or on the bus. Use toy vehicles and make-believe, helping them put words to the sensations involved.
- The page with all 7 senses would be a great page to share, especially for your young students who are already familiar with the main 5 senses. This is an opportunity to reiterate a theme that will grow with your students: "All these senses have to work together for us to feel safe, calm, and in control."
- Pick some options from Miss Lena's lists of tricks to try and help students get to know how they feel.

At this age, children are still learning the basics about their bodies. Speak out loud about sensations you are noticing as you help students get to know all their sensory systems. For example:

- "It's really noisy in here, isn't it? Sometimes lots of noise makes it hard for me to think and play. I'm going to take a few deep breaths and try to find a quieter spot."
- "Wow, that ice felt cold in my hands. It's smooth too. What do you notice? How does it feel to you?"
- "My belly feels full now that we had lunch. How does your belly feel?"



It is important that learning be a sensory-rich experience, especially at this age. Encourage exploration with all the senses, knowing that some kids may need more time to engage with certain sensations.

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Kindergarten Mini Lesson Ideas

Read *Riley the Brave's Sensational Senses* together, but remember, not all students will have the attention span to read the whole book. Feel free to skip some of the words, summarize as you read, or read little bits over the course of several days.



Learning Objective

Investigate the connection between the senses and our feelings and actions.

Storytime Tips

- Use Riley's "Sensational Plan for feeling Safe and in Control" in the story to help students explore the sensory experiences they enjoy in their day.
- Introduce the **Countdown to Calm poster** and try it together, using the activities to engage all our senses and get our brains and bodies ready to learn.

Review the 7 senses from the story in interactive, curiosity-driven ways

- **Sight:** Share a colorful picture and discuss what you see.
- **Hearing:** Listen outside for a moment or play some bird songs (example: bit.ly/SenseSong) and have students describe what they hear or make the same sound.
- **Taste & Smell:** Choose a couple of food items that no one is allergic to, such as raisins, sesame seeds, and a tiny slice of lemon. Smell and then taste each, one at a time, and discuss what you notice. You could also pair this with a charting activity noting which was each person's favorite.
- **Touch & Proprioception:** Split up into groups and give each group one of the items from your **Mindful Kids Sensory Pack**. Have them feel and explore the item. Then take turns giving each group the opportunity to describe the item and how they might use it. Switch items and repeat so students have a chance to explore the whole pack.
- **Balance:** Pair up. Both of you stand tall on both feet and notice how that feels. Then, one at a time, try balancing on one foot. Does your partner's head or body move? Is it easier to do on one leg than on the other? Get curious and share what you discover.

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1st Grade Mini Lesson Ideas

Read *Riley the Brave's Sensational Senses*, pausing frequently to discuss and engage with students about the story and the concepts introduced.

Find additional conversation prompts and tips for engaging students on this topic in **Riley the Brave's Sensational Senses *Discussion Guide***.



Learning Objectives

- Students will identify the five main senses plus proprioception and balance.
- Students will understand the basic function of the hidden sense proprioception.

Lesson

- Ask students to identify the 7 senses discussed in the story and write/draw them on the board or chart paper.
- Discuss proprioception: This sense helps them know where their body is in space. It's how they can sit down in their chair without looking. It's part of why it feels so funny when you think there's another stair and there isn't.
- Explore proprioception with a partner mirror hands activity (example: **bit.ly/SensesMirror**) where pairs of students gently push hands together. One student moves their hands around, varying the pressure. The other tries to mirror. Then switch. Proprioception in their hands (and possibly legs if they got unsteady) helped them know what to do. Have teams discuss and report what they observe.
- Discuss balance: This sense helps them stay upright and move smoothly. Like all our senses, balance is trying to keep us safe, particularly by protecting the head. Why do you think the head is important to protect? (Answer: Our brain is *really* important!)
- Explore balance by walking on a line of tape on the floor or a small obstacle course. How do they feel when they wobble? Some students may like the feeling, and some may feel more nervous. We all experience the world differently, and getting to know *your* sensational senses is important for feeling safe and ready to learn.

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2nd Grade Mini Lesson Ideas

Read *Riley the Brave's Sensational Senses*, pausing frequently to discuss and engage with students about the story and the concepts introduced.

Find additional conversation prompts and tips for engaging students on this topic in **Riley the Brave's Sensational Senses *Discussion Guide***.

Learning Objective

Students will apply their understanding of the senses to help them prepare their brains and bodies for learning.

Lesson

- Explain that just like Riley, students can use their senses to help get their brains and bodies ready for learning, especially if they feel restless or distracted. Sample questions for discussion:
  - "How do you feel when you're *not* ready to learn?"
  - "What are some ways we can use our senses to feel more focused or calm, like Riley?"
- Break into groups, assigning each group one sense. Have each group come up with ways they can use that sense in helpful ways in the classroom.
- Optional: Set up sensory-friendly items at different tables (e.g., soft fabric for touch, a calming image for sight, mint or gum for taste, etc.). Give students a few minutes to rotate between the stations and experience each sense. As they do, ask them to notice how they feel when they focus on each sense, especially coming back to the central question: "Does your brain and body feel ready to learn?"
- Provide students with an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned through writing, drawing, small group discussion, or another preferred form of communication.
- Keep the learning going with other items from this toolkit, such as the **Mindful Moment** activity or **Becoming a Sensory Detective with Riley the Brave**.



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2nd Grade Mini Lesson Ideas

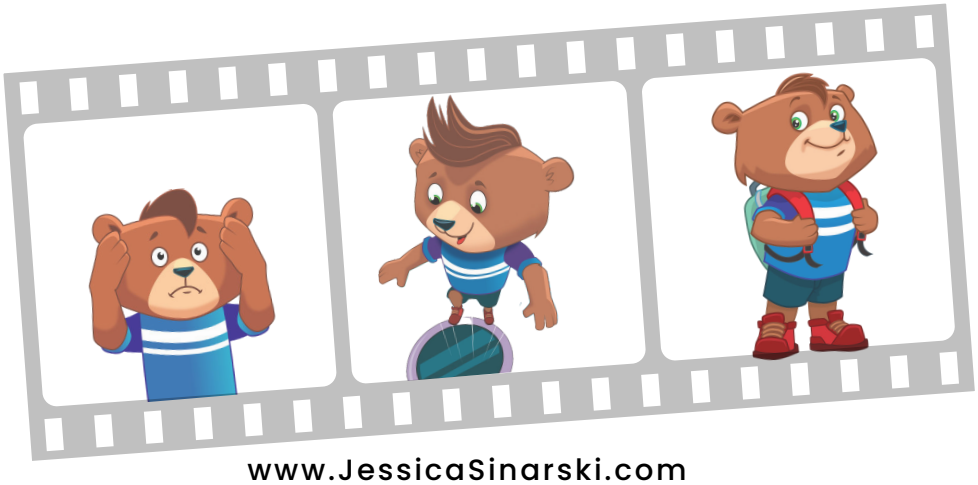
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Learning Objective

Students will understand that there are differing sensory needs within the classroom community.

Lesson

- Use **this YouTube video** from Differing Minds to further explain sensory processing.
- Jumping off (pun intended 😉) the discussion of the word "normal" in *Riley the Brave's Sensational Senses*, have small groups think about how big or small their cups are for each sense.
- Emphasize that our senses' first priority is to keep us safe, regardless of metaphorical cup size.
- Optional: Use the activity **My Sensory Cup** on the following page to dig deeper. Keep in mind that sensory processing difficulties make it challenging to identify and distinguish sensory input and needs. It may not be possible to complete "My Sensory Cup" independently.
- Encourage students to think about what works best for them individually, just like Riley finds what works best for him. This may also be a good opportunity to discuss how one person's need to move and make noise impacts another person's need for quiet.
- Whether your sensory cup is large or small, everyone hits "Sensory Overload Status" from time to time. Complete **My S.O.S. Rescue Plan with Riley the Brave** in a time of steadiness to prepare.



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My Sensory Cup

Think of a recent time you were trying to learn. Put an X along each line below to show how your senses were feeling. Not sure? That's okay! Just draw a question mark, and go on to the next sense.





Let's think: What does this tell you about your sensational senses?

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