

This activity contributes to the following badges:



Community Impact Staged Activity Badge



Beaver Creative Activity Badge



Beaver Disability Awareness Badge



Cub Disability Awareness Badge

## Beavers | Cubs

# Make sensory bags

Autism Awareness Week, 26 March Help your section to better understand autism with this quick and simple activity

Time 20–30 minutes

### Equipment

- ziplock bags
- baby oil
- food colouring in a range of colours
- glitter, shiny confetti, sequins, plastic beads or gems, or sand
- water
- duct tape

### Instructions

**1** Before your meeting, familiarise yourself with the information available at [scouts.org.uk/autism](https://scouts.org.uk/autism) so that you're able to discuss autism with your section. The National Autistic Society also have lots of useful information at [autism.org.uk](https://autism.org.uk).

**2** Talk to your section about autism. Explain that it affects how people experience the world around them, it can cause a lot of anxiety, and that their senses may be over- or under-sensitive, or both. Then give everyone in your section a ziplock bag and ask them to squeeze in a couple of generous squirts of baby oil, before applying a few drops of food colouring.

**3** Next, they can sprinkle in glitter, confetti, sequins, plastic beads or gems, and/or



sand if they wish. This is their sensory bag, so let them choose what goes inside it.

**4** Now they can add a little water to their bag before carefully forcing out as much air as possible (without spilling the contents) and sealing it tightly shut. Add a layer of duct tape to the ziplock to make it leakproof.

**5** Now they can squeeze, squish and mix up the contents of their bag, still being careful as the bag could burst. How do they feel when they're engaging with their sensory bags? And how do they think someone with autism might benefit from them? Might they find that it relaxes or reduces anxiety? Explain that everyone

with autism is different and that some may really dislike the sensory bags. Discuss what they might prefer with your section.

### Take it further

Try playing a game where only half the players know the rules. Discuss how it feels, both from the perspective of those who don't know the rules and those who know the rules but can't understand why the others don't know what to do. This will provide some insight into the difficulties some people with autism have with picking up social rules. You can also explore and take action on the topic of disability, using the A Million Hands resource pack, which you can find at [amillionhands.org.uk](https://amillionhands.org.uk).

### Explorer Scout Young Leaders

Your Young Leaders could lead this activity to work towards their mission 2.