

Mary Vinish

Snoezelen Park



John Dolan School



What is a Snoezelen Park?

“Snoezelen” is a combination of two Dutch words meaning “to sniff” and “to doze,” capturing the concepts of sensation and relaxation. A Snoezelen room is a multi-sensory environment creating a magical world of sensory delights to foster relaxation, cooperation and participation. Inside a Snoezelen room you can expect to experience a soft, safe, and stimulating environment with comfortable seating, interactive wall panels, large-muscle play activities, special lighting, shimmering reflections and soothing music.

The goal of Snoezelen is total relaxation and enjoyment, allowing children the opportunity to explore sensory stimulating activities at their own pace and initiative. Research has shown that children using Snoezelen rooms exhibit: increased focus and engagement; increased motivation and responsiveness; increased coordination; enhanced interactive play skills. As a result of a child experiencing a Snoezelen room, one generally finds an increase in smiles, happiness and an enhancement of social relationships in general.

The first Snoezelen room in Canada was opened in 1992 at the Bloorview MacMillan Centre in Toronto. In September of 2000, Saskatchewan’s first Snoezelen room opened at Holy Family School in North Battleford. On May 27th, 2003, John Dolan School celebrated the Grand Opening of Saskatoon’s first Snoezelen Park-

Mary Vinish

Snoezelen Park



Snoezelen Park Guidelines

- ⇒ John Dolan School is a scent-free and nut-free environment.
- ⇒ Food & drink are not allowed in the Park.
- ⇒ Please clean hands with sanitizer when entering.
- ⇒ Remove shoes when using mats, leaf chair, ball pool, and waterbed.
- ⇒ Splints should be removed, or socks placed over them, to avoid ripping of mats.
- ⇒ Clean equipment as necessary during the Snoezelen session. Cleaning materials are in the white cupboard.
- ⇒ To avoid accidents in the ball pool, consider laying a green pad underneath the student. Pads are in the white cupboard.
- ⇒ Turn all equipment off when leaving the Park, return remotes to holders, remove CD or tape, return lift to charging unit, turn off lights and close the door.



Planning a Snoezelen Session

- ◆ Adults should become familiar with equipment themselves prior to student use.
- ◆ A sensory assessment should be completed for each child prior to using the Snoezelen Park. Evaluations should be completed after each session.
- ◆ Session lengths may vary depending on the child. Average session length is 45 minutes.
- ◆ Transitioning in & out of the Park should be part of the session time. Begin & end the Snoezelen experience gradually.
- ◆ You are the child's facilitator-your role is to assist the child as he/she wishes in whatever activity is chosen.
- ◆ The facilitator should be someone who knows the child well & is able to understand responses of pleasure & discomfort. A consistent facilitator is preferable.
- ◆ 1:1 facilitating is best. The student/staff ration should not exceed 3:1
- ◆ Do not force students to enter the Park. They may love it one day & hate it the next.
- ◆ Resist the urge to move children from place to place. If they're happy, leave them where they are.
- ◆ Consider alternating familiar Snoezelen equipment with unfamiliar Snoezelen equipment. However, always go back to what the child finds calming & enjoyable.
- ◆ Talking should be soft-toned and minimal, unless it is soothing & enjoyable for the child.
- ◆ Keep in mind everyone registers & interprets sensory information differently. When in doubt, keep it simple and safe.

The Snoezelen Equipment

Upper Level

- ◆ **Aromatherapy Panel**-touch one of the four button switches to activate a fan-blown scent
- ◆ **Bubble Mirror**-watch reflections change shape and size as you move
- ◆ **Fish Bubble Tube**-fish swim up and down, providing visual stimulation & tracking practice
- ◆ **Fibre Optics**-long strands of connected lights that change color
- ◆ **Catherine Wheel**-colorful pinwheel has 4 interactive touch pads (speed, pattern, inverse, reverse)
- ◆ **LoopieWall Panel**-ball is placed into 1 of 2 top openings; children track and listen as the ball travels through the transparent ribbed tubing
- ◆ **Projectors & Effects Wheels**-mounted on the upper level walls providing colored, slow moving images
- ◆ **Chase-a-Lite**-try to hit the colored button when it lights up & hear the music; light speed & pattern can be adjusted to ensure success
- ◆ **Black Light Wall**-fluorescent-colored strands and wands glow under a starry parachute; white gloves and sensory kit available
- ◆ **Tac Tile Wall**-wooden panels offer a multitude of manipulative stimulation experiences
- ◆ **Music**-CD & cassette player located in the white cupboard with a variety of music; Juke Box

Lower Level

- ◆ **Chill-Out Chair**-comfortable, supportive, and relaxing seating option that offers a gentle hug sensation
- ◆ **Large Soft Rocker**-positional choice that offers a smooth rocking motion
- ◆ **Soft Play Area**-has steps and a ramp for smaller children who enjoy climbing and jumping
- ◆ **Sparkling Carpet**-located at the bottom of the Soft Play Area; when feet or hands touch the carpet, it twinkles
- ◆ **Evening Breeze**-"fan" located above Vibrating Mat has large button switches and can be operated by child or facilitator
- ◆ **Vibrating Mat**-sit or lie on comfortable mats with different patterns and intensities of vibration & heat
- ◆ **Ball Pool**-balls change color and glow, music comes from underneath & pool gently vibrates
- ◆ **Interactive Bubble Tube**-touch large switches to change color or stop the bubble flow by pressing the middle switch
- ◆ **Ball Bubble Tube**-air bubbles carry colored balls up & down the tube
- ◆ **Fiber Optics**-long strands of lights provide visual & tactile stimulation
- ◆ **Leaf Chair**-chair cradles the body & provides a gentle, swinging motion; fibre optics can accompany this activity
- ◆ **Cascading Lights**-a sea of fibre optic light located in the center of multi-colored mats

John Dolan School's Mission Statement

to enhance each student's quality of life through educational experiences and caring relationships that foster independence and self-esteem

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Saskatoon Board of Education
- Ronald McDonald Children's Charities and McDonald's Restaurants
- Saskatchewan Learning
- Former parents & staff of John Dolan School who initiated the idea of a park honouring Mary Vinish
- Estate of Anna Patricia White
- George Reed Foundation
- Hilderman, Witty, Crosby, Hanna & Associates – Landscape Architects
- Canada Safeway
- Yanke Transport
- FlagHouse – Snoezelen Park Equipment
- Family and Friends of Mary Vinish
- Staff and Volunteers, past and present, of John Dolan School

Mary Vinish

Snoezelen Park

John Dolan School

Phone: 306-683-7290

Fax: 306-683-7296

Email:

<http://schools.spsd.sk.ca/johnd/index.html>