

Gentry Primary News June 2022

We have applied for a grant from Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas in the amount of **\$149,998.58** for a **Sensory playground**. They said we could apply up to \$150,000! Last year, they had 310 applicants and funded 41 projects. We had a committee of parents, employees, district personnel, building admin, and a community business partner: Happy Playgrounds. Daniel Collins, a certified playground safety inspector and playground designer, donated his time and labor by visiting the site with Mr. Barrett, Mrs. Folger, and myself. The committee had compiled a collaborative document of sensory equipment that would benefit students. The equipment addresses all 5 modes of sensory input: auditory (outdoor musical instruments), vestibular & proprioceptive (gross motor movement), tactile and visual (panels). From that resource, Mr. Collins designed the sensory playground (which will be an addition to the current playground) and also donated a blueprint and quote for the grant. (see images below). They will complete a turn-key installation (cost is included in the quote) if we receive the grant. The grant goes through multiple reviews and chosen grants go through to the next stage until recipients are chosen. It is a very competitive grant. Recipients will find out in December and funds are dispersed January 2023. If awarded, we would have the installation complete before the 23-24 school year begins.

2022-1149 Gentry Primary School

CONTACT INFORMATION

PROJECT OVERVIEW

DETAILS

BUDGET

DOCUMENTATION

* Project Title

Sensory Playground

* Amount Requested

Amount must be between \$5,000 and \$150,000.

\$149,998.58

What is the need? Why does your organization wish to undertake this project?

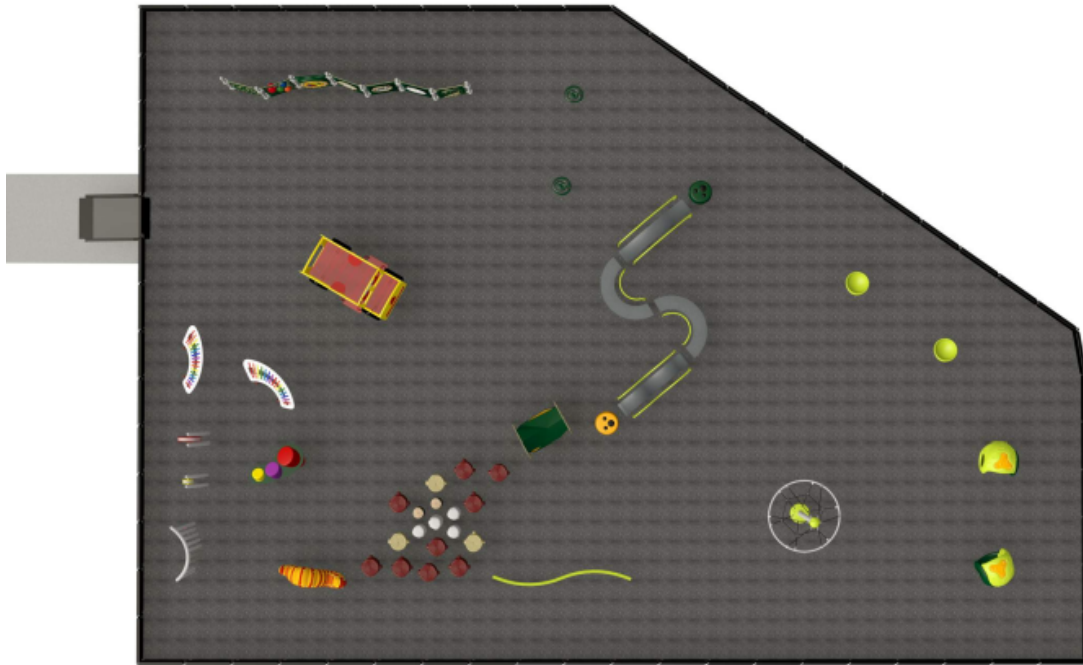
We need to provide physical opportunities through outdoor play that address diverse sensory input needs. The current campus of Gentry Primary school was constructed almost 2 decades ago. There is a standard elementary playground. Since becoming principal two years ago, we have sought ways to **add resources and provide equity in resources to address diverse student needs**. We have seen an influx in the number of students who benefit from **sensory input and self-regulation behavior training**. We also have students with physical limitations and additional health needs who cannot manage some of the standard equipment we have. In designing a **custom playground for our K-2 needs, equitable access to sensory input** for the wide span of gross motor skills (**vestibular & proprioceptive input**)

our students demonstrate, as well as the other modes of **sensory input: auditory, visual, and tactile** needs are met. There are many **benefits** to sensory play including: learning through exploration, fostering curiosity, problem solving, and creativity. Sensory play helps to **build nerve connections in the brain** and encourages the development of language and motor skills. The sensory playground will also be used by our physical therapists and occupational therapists. As students receive this stream of **sensory inputs through play and therapy**, students' **behavioral response as well as motor responses** improve through stronger neurological systems that process, interpret, and organize the sensory sensation. The response in the neurological system also allows a student to return to the executive functioning stage as emotions calm. This helps a child to develop **self-regulation skills through an awareness of self-help skills** as they mature. This development of self-regulation and awareness skills is **early intervention for mental and behavioral health. In the context of Social Determinants of Health**, addressed through this project, is the opportunity to engage in physical activity opportunities which has a significant effect on **students' health, well-being and quality of life. In addition is the social context of building positive relationships with peers which, in turn, transfers to positive relationships within the family dynamic and/or caregivers. Improving social and physical environments lends itself to students' achieving their full potential for physical, emotional, mental and behavioral health as well as overall well-being.**









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Summer Reading Program: In the first week, we had 52 books checked out!! It was great to have contact with families and see kids carrying those books home! Parent comment: "This is so great! We'll be here every week. We're making sure we read at least 5 pages of a chapter book every morning before we do anything else!" We currently have 108 books checked out!