



Sensory Playtime Project



United Way of Tucson
and Southern Arizona

What is the Sensory Playtime Project?

The Sensory Playtime Project is a collaboration between the Town of Sahuarita, United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona, and the Early Childhood Partnership of Southern Pima County. A specialized play area featuring a Sensory Wall as well as the Imagination Playground will be open to the public year round, each Saturday from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m., at no cost, starting Saturday, February 19.

"The Sensory Playtime Project creates the first Sensory Special Needs Play Area in the Town of Sahuarita with the purchase of two items: a Sensory Wall and the Imagination Playground," says Vanessa Felty, of United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona, who wrote the grant to secure funding for the project. For more information about Imagination Playground, a boxed set mobile play system, go to: <http://www.imaginationplayground.org/faq/>. "The Imagination Playground greatly expands our services to everyone in the community," says Debbie Summers, Town of Sahuarita Parks and Recreation Director. The "Sensory Wall" will provide play therapy to children with special needs.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers, called "**Playtime Associates**" will receive special training in how to use the Imagination Playground. Volunteers, (minimum age 15) are needed year round to volunteer at least 1 hour between 12 – 3 p.m. each Saturday. Free volunteer training (45 minutes) is offered monthly or by appointment; for more information contact **Vanessa Felty at 520-903-3922** or vfelty@unitedwaytucson.org.

Business Engagement Opportunities

Additionally, the project will partner with local businesses, which will be known as "**Sensory Partners.**" "Sensory Partners" will host (for example) "Sensory Nights"/"Sensory Afternoons" at local restaurants, as well as "Sensory Days" at the local movie theater, and designated hair salons/barber shops. "This will enable families with sensory special needs children to have a designated time to take their children to places that recognize and accommodate those sensory special needs for children and their families," says Felty. Felty has already recruited one Sensory Partner, **Jeff's Barbershop & Beauty Salon** in Green Valley that will offer a designated time each month to serve children with sensory special needs and their families. If you are a local business and would like to be a Sensory Partner, please contact **Vanessa Felty at 520-903-3922** or vfelty@unitedwaytucson.org.

The Goal: Building a Better Community for All

Felty has been inundated with positive responses from parents who have children with special needs, including an email from local parent Darcy Botham who stated, *"Thank you for building this for children who need it desperately. Finally, a special-needs-family-friendly place to play!"*