

Coma stimulation programs were developed on the premise that structured stimulation could prevent sensory deprivation and accelerate recovery. Sensory input may be provided through the vestibular, visual, tactile, auditory, and olfactory systems. Emphasis should be placed on selecting items that reflect the child's age and development, culture, personality, likes/dislikes, hobbies, significant relationships, and pets. However, controversy exists regarding the efficacy of stimulation used in the care of a comatose child.¹²⁶ The first step is to select appropriate sensory stimuli. In addition, items that are selected should be reevaluated periodically, so that ineffective stimuli can be eliminated. The rehabilitation team should involve the family in the selection of meaningful items to be used for stimulation to individualize the program.