MISSION STATEMENT
How might we build a toy that incorporates sensory integration therapy (SIT) for a young child with ASD?

BACKGROUND
Difficulty processing sensory information is a common manifestation of children with ASD. Additionally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many children with ASD aren’t receiving the same amount of sensory therapy that they would have access to in educational or social settings. Our toy seeks to aid the sensory processing abilities of children with ASD during this time when regular access to sensory therapy is limited.

RESEARCH
Research for this project was conducted through reviews of online forums and a survey given to community members. The following points are the main conclusions drawn from the above:

● each child is different; one toy does not fit all
● many children with ASD like toys like Legos because they can use their hands and their imaginations to build new things
● putty and gel are great because of their malleable textures
● fuzzy textures work well because they are soft to the touch
● unnecessary bright lights and loud noises should be avoided because they can cause overstimulation

THE DESIGN
Originally, we were working on a singular toy that had many different features, however, after our research we decided to create individual panels that incorporated educational and/or sensory features that could be attached together so each child could create a customized rug, cube, or other shape according to their needs. This also allows for sharing or trading with friends to promote social interaction.

Each panel is 6” x 6” with a soft fabric or cardboard base. The panels connect to each other using magnets. Currently, we have 8 panels in prototyping.

NEXT STEPS
● Conduct a usability study.
● Refine prototypes based on usability feedback.
● Adjust prototype construction including stronger magnets for more secure connections.

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