

Making Sense of the Senses



An Introduction to Sensory Integration and the Different Sensory Systems



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Recognising our need for Sensory Input

Did you know that your body needs a certain amount of sensory input for you to be at your best? This booklet will introduce you to the seven different sensory systems and explain the process of sensory integration. By reading this booklet we hope you will have a greater understanding of sensory integration and its importance when considering individuals development and behaviour.

Making Sense of Ourselves and the Environment

Sensory Integration is controlled by the central nervous system, which is made up of the brain and the spinal cord. Our brain works in a very complex way to process information from our bodies and the environment around us. How our brain processes all this information can have a major impact on what we do, how we feel and what we think. We gather information about our bodies and the environment around us through seven senses:



What we smell, this is known as our **olfactory sense**



What we taste, this is known as our **gustatory sense**



What we hear, this is known as our **auditory sense**



What we see, this is known as our **visual sense**



What we touch, this is known as our **tactile sense**



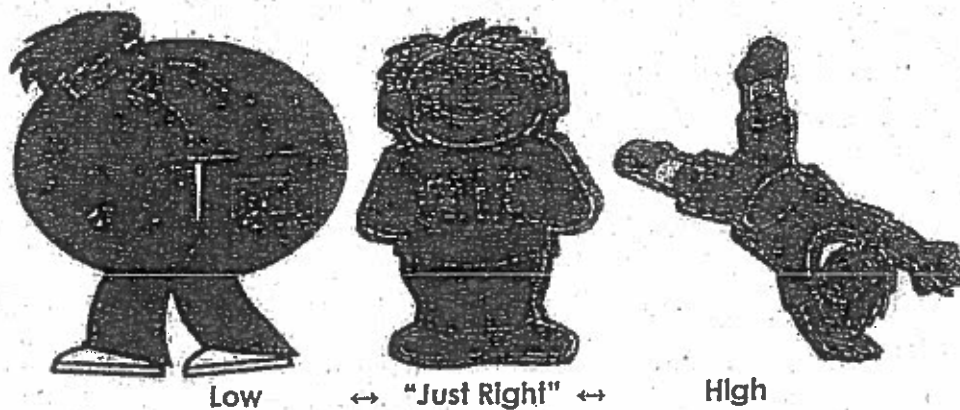
How we move, this is known as our **vestibular sense**



Our muscles, this is known as the proprioception sense

This sensory information goes to our brain (input) where it is organised and processed. A response (output) to this information is then made, and it is this entire process that is known as **Sensory Integration**.

Usually the process of sensory integration does occur automatically, unconsciously and without effort. For most children sensory integration develops in the ordinary course of childhood activities. When this process happens in this way we then also have the ability (sometimes with assistance depending on age) to self-regulate our arousal level i.e. have the ability to know what amount and type of sensory information we require for the given activity. In other words, we can recognise and therefore regulate when we need to "wake up" i.e. when our arousal level is too low, when we are "just right" i.e. where we need to be to concentrate and learn and when we are "high" i.e. when our arousal level is too high.



At some point in our lives, most of us will have difficulty processing sensory information, however when it interferes with our ability to function in our daily lives, it can be a problem.

This is the case for some children where their bodies have an inability to take in and process sensory information. This is more commonly known as sensory processing disorder (SPD) or dysfunction in sensory integration (DSI) i.e. difficulties with organising sensory information to carry out everyday tasks such as dressing, eating and playing. Some activities and social situations may also be difficult. SPD/DSI can appear in any combination of the following senses: hearing, sight, touch, smell, taste or movement.

Some common characteristics include:

- Over or under responds to sensory input
- Unusually high or low activity level
- Self-regulation difficulties (i.e. recognising and regulating arousal level)

Before looking at the different sensory systems in more depth, it is important to acknowledge that everyone has individual sensory preferences for calming, waking up, concentrating, etc. What works for one individual may not necessarily work for another. The key is to figure out which strategies work for each individual and how you can integrate them into their daily routine.

Olfactory Sense



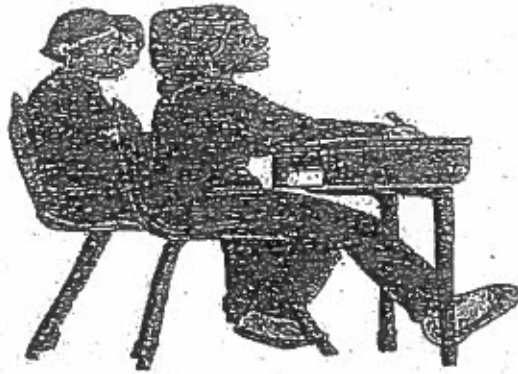
Smelling...

Smell is strongly linked with emotions and memory. What your nose smells can help change your mood and sometimes help you to remember.

- Peppermint and lemon can help with concentration
- Lavender, orange and Ylang Ylang can help with relaxation
- Orange and lavender can help with restlessness
- Chamomile, sage and sandalwood can help with nervous tension and stress

Auditory Sense

All about Listening



Some of us learn best when we are sitting quietly. Others function best in a stimulating noisy environment. Sometimes it just depends on the task you are doing and the time of day!

Often individuals need assistance to find the right amount of sound, when to use this and with what intensity. It may be that these individuals are unable to block out or ignore irrelevant sounds in the environment, which will affect their ability to function, or on the other hand, that they need auditory input in order to function effectively. There are three variations to take into consideration when dealing with auditory input, (what we hear). These are listed below:

Variations in noise level

- * Loud music
- * Quiet music
- * Screaming
- * Shouting
- * Whispering

Variations in rhythm

- * Fast music
- * Slow music
- * Arrhythmical music
- * Rhythmical music

Variations in the amount of auditory distractions

- * Quiet working environment
- * Noisy working environment
- * Sudden unexpected noise
- * Constant background noise

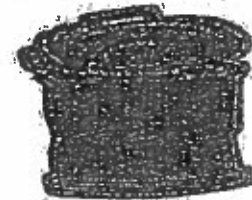
In general, sounds that are most alerting are ones that are arrhythmical, of short duration, loud or different. Sounds that are calming and easiest on the nervous system to ignore are ones that are rhythmical, (in predictable patterns), of long duration, quiet and familiar. It is a good idea where possible to have a quiet area available.

Visual Sense

Looking upon the Environment



The visual input in the environment significantly affects our ability to attain, maintain and change our levels of alertness. Everyone is different. Some individuals prefer settings that are bright, colourful and full of visual stimulation, others prefer settings that are more "cave-like" with dim lights and very little colour. Often children are unable to tell you what they prefer, this is where observation is very important as the child may seek out what they are looking for, e.g. hide under a table or in something to avoid a busy, visually stimulating room.



Often environments are set up by adults, therefore, the amount of visual stimulation will probably not suit children's needs all of the time. It is a good idea to have an area set up that is calming, generally dim lighting, pastel colours, and plain walls are calming. On the other hand, bright lighting, lots of colours, and variety tends to be alerting. There are three main variations to consider when addressing visual stimuli:

Variations in Light

- ⊕ Natural lighting
- ⊕ Artificial lighting
- ⊕ Dim lighting
- ⊕ Bright lighting

Variations in Colour

- ⊕ Bright (vibrant) colours
- ⊕ Pastel (soft) colours

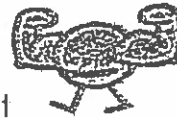
Variations in the amount of visual distractions

- ⊕ Cluttered room or desk – (have lots of to do piles in site)
- ⊕ Sparsely decorated room or desk – (have to do piles stored away)
- ⊕ Plain walls
- ⊕ Brightly decorated, busy walls

Vestibular and Proprioceptive Senses



All about Movement



There are lots of different ways to move. Movement is an effective way of helping individuals to calm down, become more alert, or keep at a "just right" level of arousal. Movement can impact individuals' arousal levels in very different ways. It is therefore vital that we tune into which types of movement influence individuals' in a positive and/or negative manner, remembering that this may change depending on the task and the time of day. Some examples of each type of movement are given below:

Up and Down (oscillation) Movements include:

- Jumping
- Sitting and bouncing on a therapy ball
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Trotting on a horse

Front and Back (linear) Movements include:

- Swinging on a swing
- Rocking in a rocking chair or rocking horse
- Being pulled and pushed on a scooter board

Circular (rotary) Movements include:

- Merry-go-round
- Twirling
- Spinning on a tire swing
- Using a sit and spin

Upside down (inverted) Movements include:

- Hanging by the knees on a playground bar
- Bending over with head between the knees
- Wheelbarrow walking
- Lying on tummy over therapy ball
- Rolling

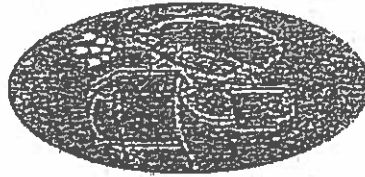
Heavy work (proprioception) Movements include:

- Monkey bars
- Climbing
- Pushing and pulling objects
- Lifting objects

Crash and Bump (proprioception) Movements include:

- Jumping into a large pile of pillows
- Tackling
- Driving bumper cars
- Having soft balls poured over you
- Playing in soft play

Gustatory Sense



The Impact of Food

Children can react in a different way from what is expected regarding food and are often called "picky eaters". This may be because they are processing sensory information differently. So in other words, the experience they are having when eating food is somewhat different, to the point that it can be uncomfortable and upsetting. It is important to look very closely at what the child finds a challenge:

What is done with the mouth – what does the child do / prefer / avoid?

- ✦ Blowing
- ✦ Sucking
- ✦ Swallowing
- ✦ Biting
- ✦ Crunching
- ✦ Chewing
- ✦ Licking

How does it feel in the mouth – how does the child respond to:

- ✦ Resistance when biting, crunching, chewing, sucking and blowing

What textures does the child accept / prefer / avoid?

- ✦ Crunchy
- ✦ Smooth
- ✦ Chewy
- ✦ "Squishy"
- ✦ Soft
- ✦ Hard

What tastes does the child accept / prefer / avoid?

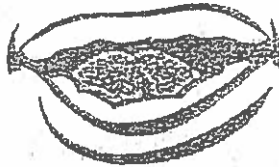
- ✦ Sour
- ✦ Sweet
- ✦ Salty
- ✦ Spicy
- ✦ Bitter

What temperatures does the child favour?

- ✦ Hot
- ✦ Warm
- ✦ Cold

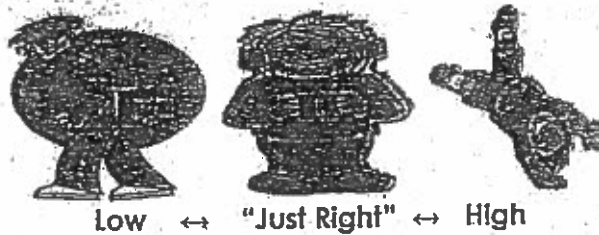
Any issues with:

- ✦ The colour of foods
- ✦ The smell of foods
- ✦ Gagging



Put Something in your Mouth

Oral motor input improves our ability to pay attention while undertaking tasks. Oral motor input can also be used to self-regulate (calm or alert ourselves) when we are feeling low or high or to maintain ourselves at "just right".



Food and non-food items can be used to help children regulate. Please find some examples below:

Food Items

We have all experienced eating when we are not hungry. This can be an indication that our body wants a certain kind of sensory input for self-regulation purposes.

Foods that tend to be alerting are:

Cold e.g. ice-cream, lolly-pops, ice cold drinks, flavoured ice cubes

Sour e.g. grapefruit, pickles, lemon or lime wedges, fizzy cola bottles

Spicy e.g. hot salsa, fire balls, cinnamon chewing gum, curry

Minty e.g. extra strong mints, polos, chewing gum

Crunchy e.g. pretzels, nuts, raw vegetables, rice cakes, crisps

Chewy e.g. cheese cut into cubes, raisins, sports mixture, bagels/baguettes

Foods that tend to be calming are:

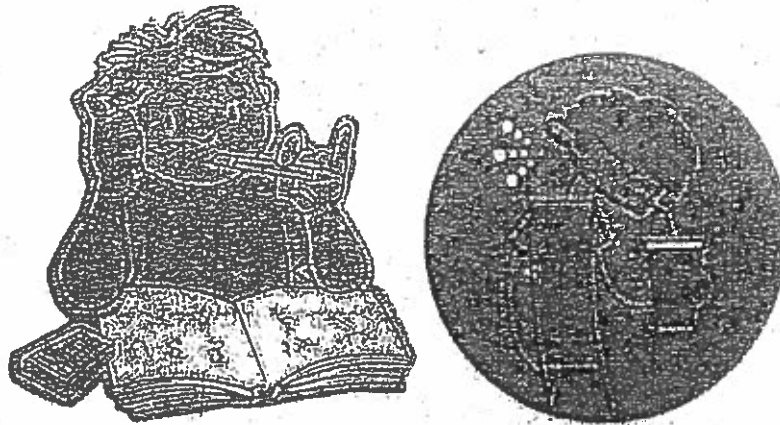
Warm e.g. hot chocolate, warm soup, mashed potatoes, baked potatoes

Smooth e.g. chocolate when sucked, blended soup, pastes and spreads

Sweet e.g. chocolate, raisins, sweets, sweet potatoes, sweet apples, nectarines



Some foods fall under the "heavy work" category, giving a workout to the jaw and cheek muscles. These foods can either calm or alert e.g. chewing gum and the use of a straw to suck up juice: the longer or narrower the straw, the more it takes to suck up the juice. The thicker the juice, e.g. milkshakes, smoothies, slushes, the more sucking it takes to retrieve the juice.



Non-Food Items

There are many non-food items that can be used to help self-regulate. Please find some examples below:

- Chewing on straws can provide "heavy work" to the jaw muscles
- Sipping and sucking from a water bottle can help you to stay at "just right"
- Sucking and blowing activities use the same trunk and chest muscles as breathing e.g. blowing a whistle, blowing bubbles, cotton wool football (scoring goals against partner, using a straw and a piece of cotton wool).
- Deep breathing
- Chewing, biting or pulling on a theratubing necklace or bracelet. Theratubing comes in different colours, diameters and levels of resistance. Theratubing can be soaked overnight in vanilla to remove the noxious taste.
- Chewing, biting or pulling on a chewy tube. Chewy tubes come in three different colours and are T shaped.
- Chewing on a piece of Chewlery. Chewlery comes in necklaces and wrist bands.
- Musical instruments that involve blowing
- Whistling or humming while working
- Singing a song

Tactile Sense

Different Types of Touch Input



There are four main types of touch input. All individuals will have their own preferences; however some may need help to find their preferences and when to use them. Bear in mind that some individuals will have difficulty interpreting some touch stimuli, indeed, they may not be able to tolerate and accept some forms of touch. On the other hand, some or the same individuals will seek out certain types of touch input.

Touch input can be used to calm, alert and/or help individuals to keep at a "just right" level of alertness. It is important to tune into the individual to see what type of touch s/he prefers and to experiment with different types of touch stimuli to see what type of impact it has on arousal level. Some examples of the four main ways to gain touch input are given below:

Fidgeting and holding objects

- ✿ Holding a favourite toy/piece of material
- ✿ Various fidget items

Temperature Variables

- ✿ Warm Baths
- ✿ Cool showers
- ✿ Neutral warmth of being cuddled by another person
- ✿ Snuggled under a blanket
- ✿ Cold / Hot drinks

Light Touch

- ✿ Tickling
- ✿ Light back scratch
- ✿ Petting a dog or cat
- ✿ Sleeping under flannel sheets
- ✿ Standing close to people

Deep Touch

- ✿ Playing with resistive clay or thera-putty
- ✿ Deep massage
- ✿ Deep "bear hug"
- ✿ Big, heavy jumper
- ✿ Tighter or lycra clothing
- ✿ Rolling up in a duvet
- ✿ Heavy duvet on bed



For more information.....

Books about sensory processing:

The Out-Of-Sync Child (Paperback)
by Carol Stock Kranowitz

101 Activities for Kids in Tight Spaces: At the Doctor's Office, on Car, Train, and Plane Trips, Home Sick in Bed– (Paperback)
by Carol Stock Kranowitz

Understanding Sensory Dysfunction: Learning, Development and Sensory Dysfunction In Autism Spectrum Disorders, ADHD, Learning Disabilities and Bipolar Disorder (Paperback)
by Polly Godwin Emmons

Answers to Questions Teachers Ask about Sensory Integration: Forms, Checklists, and Practical Tools for Teachers and Parents (Paperback)
by Carol Stock Kranowitz

Web pages:

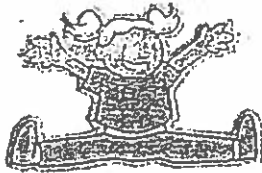
<http://www.ateachabout.com/index.asp>

<http://www.alertprogram.com/>

<http://www.sinetwork.org/aboutspd/teachers.html>

<http://www.kid-power.org/sid.html>

<http://www.incrediblehorizons.com/sensory-integration.htm>



Sensory Strategies



Washing

Difficulty	Suggestions
Dislikes having a bath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before bath time, do activities that provide deep touch input, for example, resting your hands on your child's shoulders and applying moderate pressure. • Have the bath water ready before having the child undress. Make the transition from undressing and getting into the bath as quick and smooth as possible. • If the child dislikes having his face or body washed, encourage him to wash himself. Self-imposed touch produces a less defensive reaction. • Use a large sponge or loofah sponge. Rub firmly to decrease defensiveness. • Use fragrance free soap made for sensitive skin or alternatively find scented products that the child likes
Dislikes having a shower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a hand held shower nozzle. Let the child control the direction and force of the water. • Use a large towel, and quickly and firmly wrap the child in it. Avoid exposure of the wet skin to the air: the light touch may trigger a defensive reaction. • Provide deep-touch using a towel to the extremities, hands, and feet to decrease defensiveness. If the child will tolerate it, provide a firm massage, using lotion to avoid skin irritation.
Dislikes having hair washed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seat the child firmly on your knee and squeeze the child firmly between your knees (deep pressure) • Place your hands on top of your child's head and exert gently but constant pressure down • Use a firm stroke or pressure as you comb or wash your child's hair • Count or have the child count as you wash and rinse the hair • Give definite time limits to the task e.g. let's count to 10, then we will stop washing your hair, provide deep pressure immediately after (see above) • Break the task into small steps and eliminate any unnecessary steps or stages • Practice each step in isolation in a stress free environment • Gradually combine these steps and perform the task in the natural environment



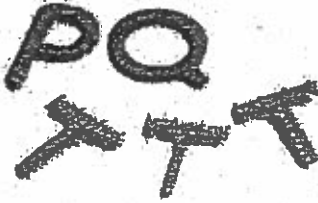
Dressing

Difficulty	Suggestions
Dislikes wearing certain clothing/is sensitive to some types of clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid buying clothing that the child perceives as irritating • Try clothes that are made of heavier materials • The head, neck and abdominal area are very sensitive to touch
Dislikes new clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash new clothing to take out the stiffness • Have the child help to select clothing
Seams on socks are irritating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn socks inside out so seam is on outside • Use seamless socks
Tags on clothing are irritating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove tags until the child can tolerate them
Takes clothes off inappropriately	<p>Clothes are over-stimulating or arousing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the child wear snug or tight-fitting clothes • Have the child wear clothes that are heavy or weighted <p>Likes the feeling of air on the skin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the child wear loose-fitting clothes for added light touch • Have the child wear clothing that moves or has different textures
Takes a long time to get dressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write down the dressing steps and display • Avoid any unnecessary steps • Lay the clothing out for the child in a sequenced order • Set a timer for dressing
Dislikes brushing/combing or getting hair cut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seat the child firmly on your knee and squeeze the child firmly between your knees (deep pressure). • Place your hands on top of your child's head and exert gently but constant pressure down. • Use a firm stroke or pressure as you comb your child's hair. • Count or have the child count as you comb or cut the hair. • Give definite time limits to the task e.g. let's count to 10, then we will stop cutting your hair, provide deep pressure immediately after. • Break the task into small steps and eliminate any unnecessary steps or stages. • Practice each step in isolation in a stress free environment. • Gradually combine these steps and perform the task in the natural environment



Food/Eating

Children can react in a different way to food from what is expected. This may be because they are processing the sensory information from the food differently. In other words, the experience they may be having is somewhat different, to the point that it could be uncomfortable and/or upsetting to have the food in their mouth or even on their plate. Some strategies are given below to help with fussy eaters:

Difficulty	Suggestions
<p>Fussy eater:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dislikes the taste • Dislikes the texture e.g. lumps, skin • Has to have food at a certain temperature • Will only tolerate certain textures • Dislikes sticky food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the textures, tastes and temperatures preferred • Try to make mealtimes a relaxed and pleasurable experience by avoiding introducing new foods or challenges at this time • Set aside a separate time for graded feeding programmes to remediate the underlying problem • When introducing new foods, do it gradually • Give sauces on side rather than on top of food • Before meal times, provide deep touch, resistive oral motor and total body exercises to decrease touch defensiveness
<p>Avoids certain food smells</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your home environment for overwhelming smells • Avoid using strong deodorants/perfumes in communal areas • Avoid using incense sticks, pot-porri, air fresheners
<p>Difficulty sitting at the dinner table</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try a mov'in'sit cushion to enable the child to move whilst seated • Have a specific time limit that you expect the child to be seated at the table • Allow a movement break after a certain amount of mouthfuls
<p>Puts non-food objects into mouth</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-food items can be used in the mouth to improve our ability to pay attention while undertaking tasks, and can also be used to calm us, alert us, and/or to maintain ourselves at "just right". • Do not stop the child gaining this oral input as they may be using it to self-regulate. If you feel the object used by the child is inappropriate, feel to find another object that is similar in texture that is suitable.
<p>Chews and/or mouths non-food objects</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not stop the child from doing this, s/he may require this stimulation in order to focus • Encourage the child to use a chewy tube – displayed over or to chew, bit or pull on drinking straws to provide the stimulation they are seeking ("heavy work" to the jaw muscles) to either calm, alert or stay as "just right". • Sipping and sucking from a water bottle can help with focus • Sucking and blowing activities use the same trunk and chest muscles as breathing and help with calming e.g. blowing a whistle, blowing bubbles

Routine

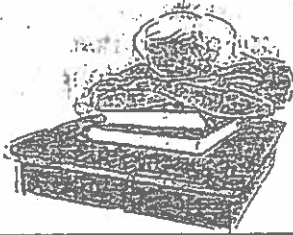
Difficulty	Suggestions
Gets upset if a routine, plan or expectation is altered/changed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to stick to a morning, afternoon and evening routine where possible • Give plenty of warning if a routine has to be altered or changed • Ensure plans are formulated where possible before sharing with a child who has difficulty accepting change or worries about forthcoming events
Does things a harder way than is needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have set routines • Ensure the child knows what you expect • Be consistent in your approach • Demonstrate your version of what you find easier

Organisation

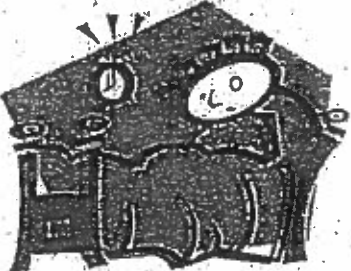



Difficulty	Suggestions
Forgets homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the child to use a TO DO LIST or to keep a diary • Make a prompt for the child on the wall to look at their homework diary: DO YOU HAVE HOMEWORK?
Forgetful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pack school bag the night before • Get clothing ready the night before for the next day • Use a TO DO LIST • Use memory prompts around the house • Set reminders on your mobile • Use sticky notes

Attention

Difficulty	Suggestions
Does not listen to instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say the child's name before giving an instruction • Ensure you get a response from the child before giving an instruction, this may be eye contact or a "what?"
Does not take in instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give one or two step instructions • Get the child to repeat the instruction back to you to ensure his/her understanding • Give prompts and reminds of what you do expect • Limit distracting stimuli to encourage success
Easily distracted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit distractions when expected to be on a task – e.g. close the door, avoid sitting child next to the window, sit child away from other children who are easily distracted • Turn the TV off when doing homework • Say the child's name before giving an instruction • Use rugs or carpet in the area to minimise extraneous noise • Limit distracting stimuli


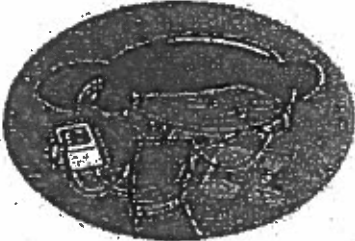
<p>Has difficulty paying attention</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit distracting stimuli • In school, find out where the child functions best in the classroom; at the back so the child can see and hear distractions – to avoid the child turning round or at the front of the class
<p>Frequently looking around the room</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is it that is distracting the child? • Can you limit the distraction? • Can you take the distraction away? • Does the child find the entire environment over stimulating? Would s/he benefit from using a quiet corner?

Sleep

Difficulty	Suggestions
<p>Has difficulty settling down before bedtime</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a calming bedtime routine where the child does the same thing every night of the week • Ensure bedtime is at the same time every night • Ensure there is no TV, playstation or computer on an hour before bedtime • Avoid playing stimulating games before bed, encourage quiet activities • Avoid reading stimulating stories • Encourage the child to have a relaxing bath, and try some lavender oil drops in the water
<p>Has trouble falling sleep</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a heavy/ weighted blanket • Use flannel sheets • Create a snug space for your child with lots of pillows or try a sleeping bag to provide deep-pressure • Try a hot water bottle • Have white noise in the background • If child requires a light on, ensure the light is not bright • Try story tapes
<p>Gets out of bed frequently after bedtime</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the child quietly back to bed and remind them that it is bedtime. DO NOT get into any sort of conversation or argument. It may be useful to make a communication card saying: STOP, return to your bedroom • Have the child make a sign for the back of their bedroom door or for near the light switch saying: STOP, remember to stay in your bedroom
<p>Has difficulty getting going in the morning</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set an alarm clock and leave in child's bedroom but away from the bedside to encourage child to get up • Have a morning routine with times for completing each activity • Ensure tasks asked of child in the morning are necessary and achievable

Sound/Listening

Some of us learn best when we are sitting quietly. Others function best in a stimulating noisy environment. Sometimes it just depends on the task you are doing and the time of day! Sounds that are most alerting are ones that are arrhythmical, of short duration, loud or different. Sounds that are calming and easiest on the nervous system to ignore are ones that are rhythmical, (in predictable patterns), of long duration, quiet and familiar. Some individuals find some noises uncomfortable; some suggestions are given below to help:

Difficulty	Suggestions
Covers ears to avoid listening to an uncomfortable noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forewarn child of any unexpected noise e.g. fire alarm testing • Limit unnecessary noise in the environment • Use rugs or carpet in the area to minimise extraneous noise • Keep a note of noises the child finds uncomfortable and share this information with the people who work with the child
Becomes upset at certain noises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacuum cleaner • Dog barking • Alarm bell • School bell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacuum when the child is not around • Use a broom, hand sweeper or electric broom • Prepare the child for sudden noise by telling them when this will happen • Do not approach the child with the vacuum cleaner running • Forewarn the child of any loud noises • Position the child toward the front of the class to facilitate his ability to attend to verbal instructions and block out irrelevant information • Try headphones, ear pugs or ear muffs
Becomes upset/irritated in busy public places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid events such as concerts, cinema, firework displays, whenever possible, until the child's sensory system can cope • Look for smaller, less crowded places to take the child on trips out • If going out to a place that may be uncomfortable, get the child to wear snug clothing, try ear plugs or encourage the child to listen to their favourite music as this may help to drown out environmental noises
Seeks to make own noise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hums • Whistles • Sings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the child where possible to continue to make this noise, as the child may need this sensory stimulation to focus. • If the noise being made is inappropriate for the environment, try to come to an agreement about a noise the child can make that meets his/her needs but also is appropriate for the environment
Unable to block out or ignore irrelevant sounds in the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit distractions where possible e.g. close the door, eliminate the distracting stimuli for that child, e.g. turn off the TV, turn the music down, close the window etc • Try headphones, ear muffs or ear plugs • Try listening to music on a MP3 player/CD player to help eliminate distracting noises


Vision



The visual input in the environment significantly affects our ability to attain, maintain and change our levels of alertness. Everyone is different. Some individuals prefer settings that are bright, colourful and full of visual stimulation, others prefer settings that are more "cave-like" with dim lights and very little colour.

Difficulty	Suggestions
Hides under table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment may be too stimulating for the child. Try making the environment less bright and colourful
Squints or covers eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Firstly ensure the child's sight is okay Encourage the child to use sunglasses when it is bright Have the blinds down Sit the child away from the window Take into consideration the lighting used in the room
Rubs eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Firstly ensure the child's sight is okay Ensure the activities asked of the child are not straining the eyes

Movement

There are lots of different ways to move. Movement is an effective way of helping individuals to calm down, become more alert, or to keep at a "just right" level of arousal. Movement can impact individuals' arousal levels in very different ways; some individuals need more movement than others to help them to self-regulate.

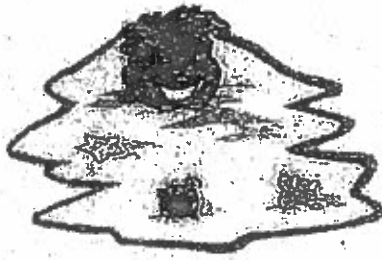
Difficulty	Suggestions
Is constantly "on the go" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the child to burn off excess energy doing purposeful play activities Encourage the child to play outside, join sporting activity clubs and to help around the house doing manual tasks Limit as much as possible playstation games Ensure the child gets enough movement Introduce some resistive/"heavy work" exercises/games, like tug of war, pulling and pushing games
Becomes excited after doing movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to finish off fast erratic movement with slow "heavy work" movements, as these tend to be more calming and organising Avoid spinning
Is hard to "get going"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get the child engaged in some fast, irregular movement that is going to increase their arousal level

<p>Concentrator / fidget</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid stopping a child from fidgeting. Having a concentrator / fidget can help with focus and attention particularly when listening • Some children need to fidget more than others to self regulate • Tune into the types of objects the child typically fidgets with, pay particular attention to the texture, if the fidgets are inappropriate for the environment, find a concentrator / fidget that is appropriate i.e. is not distracting for others, and is similar in texture for the child to use. • Use of a mov'in'sit cushion when expected to sit for longer periods • Theraband around the legs of the chair can allow the child to move their legs with some resistance when seated • Ensure the child gets movement breaks – introduce movement breaks before thinking tasks try to involve movement every twenty minutes.
<p>Constantly changes position in chair or swings on chair/rocks in chair</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try a mov'in'sit cushion or a similar cushion • Try theraband around the legs of the chair to allow the child to move their legs with some resistance when seated • Ensure the child gets movement breaks – introduce movement breaks before thinking tasks try to involve movement every twenty minutes • Try a chair ball as opposed to a mov'in'sit if the child needs more movement

Touch

There are four main types of touch input, holding objects, temperature, light touch and deep touch. All individuals will have their own preferences, however some may need help to find their preferences and when to use them. Bear in mind that some individuals will have difficulty interpreting some touch stimuli, indeed, they may not be able to tolerate and accept some forms of touch. On the other hand, some or the same individuals will seek -out certain types of touch input as comfort.

Difficulty	Suggestions
<p>Becomes irritated when lining up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hits out • Pushes • Shouts at others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position the child at end of the line. Children bumping against him/her may be threatening or painful. • Assign a special task. Have the child go ahead to make sure the area is ready, or have him stay behind to make sure the lights are turned off
<p>Avoids messy play/materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mud • Finger paints • Glue <p>May panic about feeling on hands, and want it washed off</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage less messy activities • Use tools to manipulate the supplies whenever possible (for example, a paintbrush rather than finger paint). • Use messy materials that provide resistance, such as putties or dough mixtures.

<p>Uses finger lips only when playing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before activities, provide deep pressure into the palms of the hands, such firm clapping or a modified donkey game in which you hold the child on your lap, face down and parallel to the floor. Quickly lower the child to the floor, thus activating protective reactions (the child catches himself on hands). • Progress to sustained deep pressure into the palms through resistive or weight bearing activities. • Grade activities by using the fingertips then moving to using the whole hand. If the child will tolerate it, provide deep-touch input over the hand and writing tool, i.e. hand over hand squeezing
<p>Dislikes being picked up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach people always to approach the child from the front and always make sure the child is able to anticipate the hug or expression of affection.
<p>Dislikes being touched</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By others • Unexpectedly e.g. from behind • Pulls away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the child when you are going to touch him. Always touch firmly. Assure the child that you will touch firmly and that you will not move your hands
<p>Dislikes light touch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light touch of a kiss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach others to touch the child firmly. Discuss that the child feels light touch more strongly and as if he/she were being hit. • Approach child from within his/her visual field. • Make kisses on the cheek a form of deep-touch input. Hold the child firmly and give a deep, firm kiss. • Teach friends and relatives to show affection firmly and directly.
<p>Craves deep-pressure touch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hugs • Rolled up in blanket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the child this input as it may help to calm and organise him/her especially when upset or at bedtime • Tell the child what you will do and how you will do it. ("I'm going to hug you really hard.") Respect the child's need for control. • Swaddle infants firmly. Be sensitive to their need for minimal sensory stimulation. Avoid vigorous rocking and shaking. Rock slowly in a linear direction (up and down, side to side, or front to back). Swaddle and hold them firmly; talk to them quietly and softly. • Try giving bear hugs • Give firm hugs rather than kisses • Take turns hugging, have the child hug first, then return the hug. Determine who gives the best hugs • Try using a weighted blanket or a dolphin wrap
<p>Toe walks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide deep pressure into the bottom of the feet. Seat the child firmly on your lap facing a wall. Place the child's feet flat against the wall and put pressure directly through the knees into the feet. Have the child help push.

<p>Avoids going barefoot in grass or sand, wading in water, or playing in sand at the beach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whenever possible, avoid these situations until the child is better equipped to handle them. When this is not possible or the child is ready to expand activities:• Before the activity, develop a desensitisation routine. Start with applying sustained deep pressure or massage into the child's feet. Progress to firmer massages or activities such as jumping on a trampoline.• Teach the child that these procedures will help him to overcome his discomfort. Help him to relax. Provide emotional support.
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