

Sensory Processing
In Young Children
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- Objectives**
- Gain a basic understanding of Sensory Processing theory and practice.
 - Identify behaviors indicative of a Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD).
 - Learn activities to use with children who demonstrate difficulty with sensory processing.

- History**
- Dr. A. Jean Ayres
 - Sensory Integration
 - Disorder in Sensory Integration
 - Sensory Processing Disorder

What is Sensory Processing?

Dr. A. Jean Ayres:

“The neurological process that organizes sensation from one’s own body and from the environment and makes it possible to use the body effectively within the environment.”

How Does it Occur?

- Sensory registration
- Orientation
- Interpretation
- Organization of a response
- Execution of a response

The Senses

- Auditory
- Visual
- Smell
- Taste
- Tactile
- Vestibular
- Proprioception

Behaviors seen with Sensory
Processing Dysfunction

Infants

- Cries most of day and not easily calmed
- Has trouble sleeping
- Dislikes baby swing
- Cries or pulls away when held or hugged
- Doesn't like to be on stomach

Toddlers

- Difficulty transitioning to table foods or cup
- Delayed motor skills
- Easily frustrated
- Dislikes unfamiliar environments – tantrum or cry in grocery store, restaurant...
- Daily care routines are upsetting
- Limited play skills

Toddler - Preschool

- Clumsy -falls a lot
- Unusually high or low activity levels
- Poor sleep patterns
- Poor eaters
- Dislikes playground toys
- Difficulty with transitions

Activity Suggestions

But first...

Some Basics:

- The "just-right" challenge.
- Provide child with input they are seeking
- Keep them from getting too much of what they can't handle

General Principles

- Deep pressure is calming
- Light touch is alerting, may be noxious
- Combine *enjoyable* stimuli with one that is difficult
- Learning comes through movement and exploration – being an active participant

The child who is sensitive to touch...

- Picky about what they wear -tags, fabrics, long sleeves, short sleeves...
- Limited use of hands or weight bearing on hands
- Develops pincer grasp EARLY
- Poor eating - won't take textures, cup...
- Difficulty with hygiene activities -face washed, nails cut, hair cut...

The child who is sensitive to movement...

- Dislikes playground activities
- May be very sedentary
- Delayed motor skills
- May want to be upright

The child who is under-reactive to touch...

- Excessive touching of people or things
- Unable to grade pressure – breaks toys, writing too hard or too light
- Stuffs mouth
- Difficulty using utensils

The child who is under-reactive to movement...

- In constant motion - not necessarily coordinated
- Takes unreasonable risks

The child with poor proprioceptive processing...

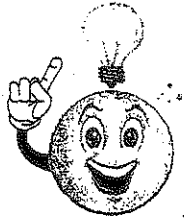
- Falls, trips, bumps into things
- Likes to be tightly swaddled
- Tires easily
- Seeks excessive jumping, running, climbing
- Likes to hit, bump, push, or pull
- Walks on toes

Resources

- Building Bridges through Sensory Integration
- Too loud, too bright, too fast, too tight
- Tools for Tots
- The Everything Parent's Guide to Sensory Integration Disorder
- The Out of Sync Child

Resources

- The Out of Sync Child has Fun
- Answers to Questions Teachers Ask About Sensory Integration
- The Sensory Connection
- Starting Sensory Integration Therapy
- Addressing Learning Differences Sensory Integration



ACTIVITY IDEA SHEET

Developmental Domain: _____

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