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Sensory Processing

webinar

CYPIT Occupational Therapy Team

Care Quality Commission Inspected and rated Outstanding
Berkshire Healthcare Charity Reg. charity 1049733
disability confident LEADER
VETERAN AWARE
Stonewall LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE EMPLOYER TOP 100 2023

Housekeeping and Structure of Session

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- Welcome- general housekeeping and confidentiality
- Learning outcomes
- Circles of support/influence
- What is Sensory Processing?
- Sensory Systems – the 'Power senses'
- What is sensory regulation?
- What is Self-regulation?
- Sensory Strategies - Take out; Put in; Teach
- Sensory equipment

Learning Outcomes

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- To have a basic understanding of sensory processing and how it affects a child's learning, emotional and behavioural responses.
- To have simple, practical sensory strategies to support your children.
- To be confident to use these strategies at home and in school.

Circles of **support/ influence**

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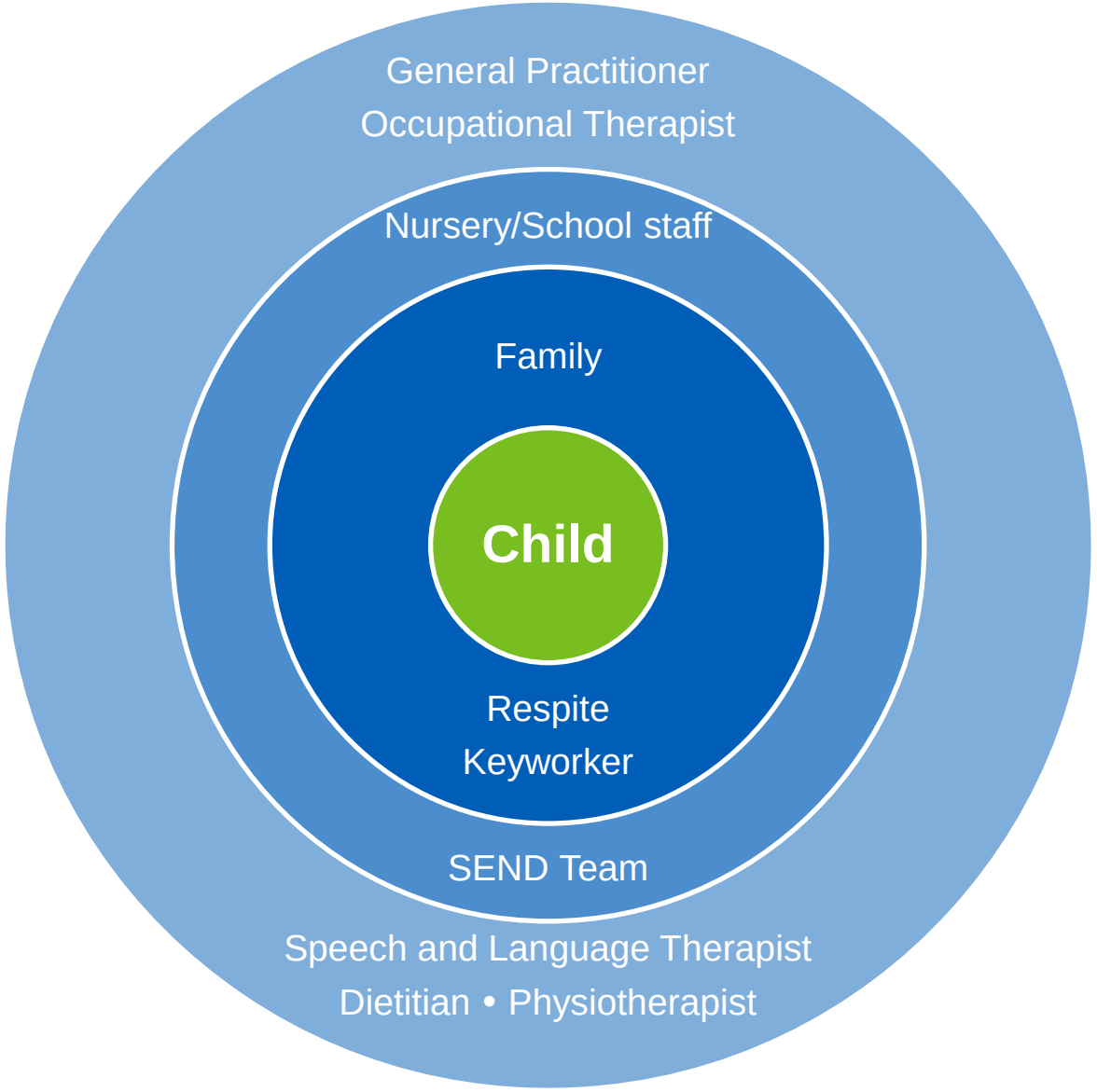

Working together:

The people who will be able to make the most change are those closest to the child

Falvey, M. A., Forest, M., Pearpoint, J., & Rosenberg, R. L. (1997)

What is Sensory Processing?

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Sensory Input

- Sensory information received from the environment and our bodies.

Sensory Processing

- Registers
- Organises
- Filters out
- Integrates and Stores

Action

- Meaningful motor, behavioural and emotional response.

The Power Senses

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- Visual (sight)
- Auditory (hearing)
- Olfactory (smell)
- Gustatory (taste)

- **Tactile (touch)**
- **Vestibular (movement and balance)**
- **Proprioception (body awareness)**
- **Interoception (internal body signals)**

The Tactile System

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- Receives information from receptors in our skin all over our bodies.
- The first system to develop and function in the womb.
- Helps us gain awareness of our own bodies and understand everything we come into contact with.
- Helps us to recognise features and subtle differences in our environment.

Fussy Eating

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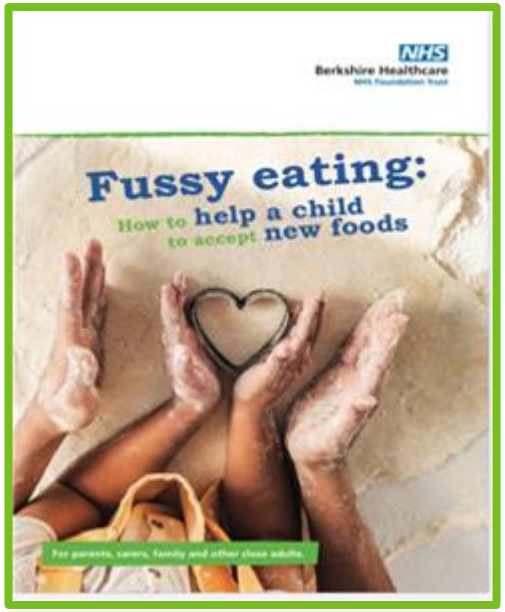
For further advice and strategies please access our ‘Fussy Eating’ Booklet via the QR code below:



The Vestibular System (movement and balance)

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- Receives information from receptors located in the inner ear.
- Helps us detect movement and changes in the position of the head.
- Helps us to counteract the pull of gravity.
- Helps us maintain balance and a stable posture.
- Tells us about speed and direction of movement.

The Proprioceptive System (body awareness)

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- Receives information from proprioceptive receptors in the muscles and joints.
- They are triggered by compression (push) and traction (pull).
- Proprioception helps us to know where we are in space, and where our body is in relation to itself.
- It helps us to gauge how much force we use.
- It helps us to organise for a task/activity.

- It has a role in regulating levels of alertness and has a calming and grounding effect.

The Interoceptive System (internal body signals)

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- Receives information from receptors inside our organs and skin.
- Allows us to notice internal body signals.
- Helps us to understand what is going on inside our bodies to regulate body functions.

What is Sensory Regulation?

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- The ability to process sensory information and organise ourselves to perform an action.
- Influences our alertness level, emotions and behaviour.
- If this is working well, we can tune out irrelevant sensory information.
- If it's not working well, we can be either under or over responsive to sensory information.

Sensory Seeking and Avoiding

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Sensory Seeking (under responsive)

- Craves touch
- Leans against people
- Seeks movement

Sensory Avoiding (over responsive)

- Avoids mess
- Fear of movement
- May appear clumsy

What is Self-Regulation?

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- The ability to attain, maintain and change alertness levels appropriately for a task or situation.

- It means your energy levels match the task; it does not mean ‘calm’.

The Calm-Alert ('Just Right') State

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- A 'Just right state' means your energy levels match the task. It helps with:
    - Maximising learning and enjoyment.
    - Coping with demands of the environment at home and at school.
    - Transitioning from one activity to another.
- Levels of alertness will fluctuate depending on the event/task.
- Our level of anxiety affects how we respond to sensory demands.

The Zones of Regulation Programme

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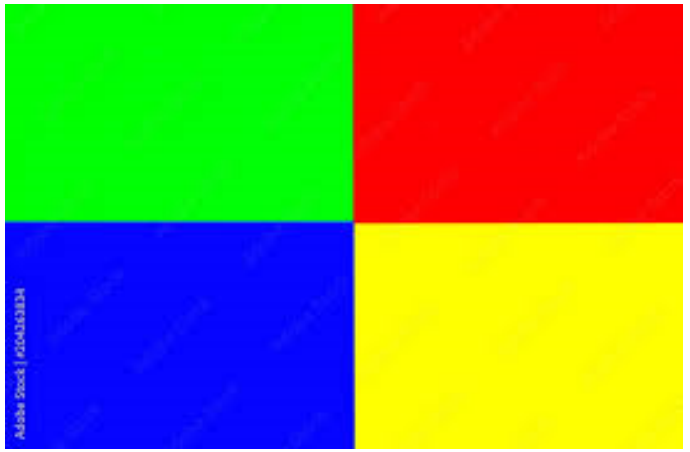
For more information please use the following QR code:



What do you do to feel ‘Just Right’?

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Consider your own level of alertness at this time.

What did you do/are you doing to achieve this state?

If you are not in a calm-alert state what could you do to help you manage this?

Alerting or Calming Input?

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- Movement – fast or slow? linear or changing direction?
- Touch – light touch or deep pressure?
- Music – fast or slow?
- Use of Voice – animated or soft? Fast or slow?
- Lighting – bright or soft? fast or slow moving?
- Food and Drink – warm or cold? strong flavours? crunchy textures?
- Space- open or enclosed?

Take out, Put in and Teach Strategy

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1.Take out

- Change/adapt the environment to help reduce sensory overload/support regulation.
- Remove sensory barriers so that your child can do the activities they need to do.

2. Put in

- Activities/equipment that help your child to do the activities they need to do.
- Activities to help build tolerance and develop their skills.

3. Teach

- Self-regulation and coping strategies.
- Empowering your child to use helpful strategies.
- Compensatory strategies.

Tactile Strategies: clothing

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Take out

- Textures/touch sensations causing distress/stopping your child from doing what they need to do.

Put in

- Messy Play/tactile activities - consider individual motivators and age.
- Opportunities- exposure during everyday activities.
- Time and space for managing the activity.
- Alternative clothing.

Teach

- Compensatory strategies.
- Building tolerance gradually.
- Give control/choice.
- Consider: time of day.

Vestibular Strategies:
always on the move

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Take out

- Long periods of time without movement.

Put in

- Opportunities to move safely and appropriately.
- Access to sensory rich environments- swings, trampoline, climbing frame, trim trails/outdoor gyms.
- Leisure/sports activities- dancing, running, using the gym.
- Use of equipment- therapy ball, hammock, scooter board.

Teach

- Which movements are calming/alerting and safe/appropriate.
- How to adapt/use the environment to get the input they need.
- Building tolerance gradually.
- Give control/choice.

Proprioceptive Strategies: bumping

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Take out

- Behaviours that are stopping your child from doing what they need to do/unsafe/ impacting others negatively.
- Input causing unsafe sensory seeking.

Put in

- Regulating activities- heavy work/weight bearing.
- Equipment e.g. Theraband, fiddle item.

Teach

- Body awareness- understanding what their body needs.
- When proprioceptive input is needed/helpful- strategies that have a positive impact.
- What is safe/appropriate.
- Give control/offer a choice.

Interoception Strategies: toileting

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Take out

- Distractions stopping your child from recognising internal signals from their bodies and responding as they need to.
- Sensory input causing dysregulation.

Put in

- Regulating strategies.
- Activities that support body awareness.
- Mindfulness activities.
- Consistent self-care routines.
- Helpful strategies- e.g. visual and verbal prompts/cues, modelling.

Teach

- Self-regulation.
- Understanding their needs- how to use strategies during the day.
- Compensatory strategies e.g. timetable needs.

Sensory Circuits

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For further advice and strategies please access our online toolkit via the QR below:

Sensory Equipment

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- Wobble or Move'n sit/wedge cushion.
- Therapy ball/therapy chair.
- Theraband/resistance band.
- Fidget toys or items.
- Chewys.
- Changing positions e.g. standing desk.
- Ear defenders.
- Weighted equipment – use with caution.
- Lycra body sock.

Next Steps

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- Trial the strategies discussed today- those you feel will support your child/the child you work with.
- Implement these into their daily routine- consistently for an extended period.
- Access our Online Resource- here you will also find videos on sensory processing.
- If progress has not been made and you still have concerns- consider making a referral via our website.

You will need to provide evidence of strategies trialled and the impact these have had.

Conclusion

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- Identify sensory processing difficulties early on and strategies that will help.
- Observe behaviours/listen- children will often show/tell you what they need.
- Implement strategies- to support regulation/engagement and skill development.
- Small changes make a big difference!
- Trial and error- with consistency.
- Recognise- when specialist input is needed.

Resources

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- CYPIT Online Resource- https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/support-and-advice/sensory-processing/
- Sensory Circuits - https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/support-and-advice/sensory-processing/sensory-circuits/
- Fussy eating- https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-and-development/eating-allergies-and-healthy-lifestyle/fussy-eating/
- Sensory processing videos- https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/children-and-young-peoples-integrated-therapies/occupational-therapy/
- The Zones of Regulation - https://www.zonesofregulation.com/learn-more-about-the-zones.html
- Alert Programme – https://www.alertprogram.com/product/alert-program-how-does-your-engine-run/
- Parenting Special Children - https://www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk/
- Autism Berkshire - https://www.autismberkshire.org.uk/
- Toileting difficulties- www.eric.org.uk
- Clothing for people with sensory sensitivities- www.sensorysmart.co.uk
- SEN Teaching Resources & Special Educational Supplies- tts-group.co.uk
- Sensory equipment- www.sensorydirect.co.uk

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Thank you

questions…?

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