

Sensory Integration: What every early childhood teacher should know

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SEVEN!!!

- Vision
- Auditory
- Tactile
- Taste
- Smell
- Vestibular (Movement and Balance)
- Proprioception (Body position)



What is Sensory Integration?

- Neurological process of organizing sensory inputs for function in daily life.
- Brain takes in sensory information and sends signals to the body as to how to respond.
- How many senses are there???

What is Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)?

- A neurological problem with Sensory Integration
- Person is unable to respond effectively to sensory inputs (from one or more of the 7 senses)
- Daily life activities are impacted
- www.SPDFoundation.net



Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) vs. "typical" sensory problems

- All of us have little sensory problems.
- A person whose sensory deficits cause him to be unable to function in daily life, has a SPD.

GROCERY SHOPPING!



Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)

- At least 1 in 20 typically developing children has a SPD
- (Ben-Sasson, et al, 2009; Ahn, et al, 2004)
- > 93% of children with Autism have a SPD
- 40-60% of children with ADHD also have a SPD

What causes SPD???

- Risk factors:
- low birth weight, prematurity
- prenatal complications
- maternal illness or stress, maternal drug use (NAS-Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome)
- low socioeconomic status, etc.
 - www.SPDFoundation.net

Young Children must be able to coordinate all 7 senses to learn about their world and function effectively.



SPD may be related to problems with learning, motor development or behavior

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination problems • Poor attention span • Academic-related problems: handwriting or cutting with scissors • Unusually high or low activity level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with self-care: tying shoes, zipping, buttoning, feeding • Low self-esteem • Poor social interaction • Oversensitivity to touch, sights or sounds |
|---|---|

3 Categories of Sensory Processing Disorder (most recognizable by teachers)

- Sensory Avoiders:
 - **RESPOND TOO MUCH!**
- Sensory Seekers:
 - *Crave More and More*
- Sensory Under-Responders:
 - respond too little



Sensory Avoiders (sensory system responds TOO MUCH...so avoids input)



- Over-responsive to sensations from one or more sensory system.
- Child may be over-aroused and respond to certain sensory input as if it were irritating or painful.

Sensory Avoiders

- Children may avoid one or more of the 7 sensations:
 - Vision
 - Auditory
 - Vestibular
 - Tactile
 - Proprioception
 - Taste/Smell



Sensory Seekers (sensory system craves more and more input)

- Craves excessive stimulation from one or more of the sensory systems.
- Child seeks more stimulation than other children.
- Child never seems to be satisfied.



Sensory Seekers

- Children may seek one or more of the 7 sensations:
 - Vision
 - Auditory
 - Vestibular
 - Tactile
 - Proprioception
 - Taste/Smell



Sensory Under-Responders (sensory system responds too little to input)



- Does not seem to notice inputs from one or more sensory system:
 - Touch
 - Visual
 - Auditory
 - Vestibular
 - Proprioception
 - Taste/smell

Sensory Under-Responders



- Gives less of a response to sensory input than other preschoolers.
- May react very slowly.
- May need especially strong inputs before he will respond.
- May appear lazy, slow or disinterested.

Some children are Seekers and Avoiders



- Common for a child with SPD to be a Seeker of one sensation and Avoider of another sensory input.
- Ex. Vestibular Seeker and Tactile Avoider
- BUT child can't avoid and seek the SAME sensory input!

Red Flags for Sensory Processing Disorders REMEMBER:

- No child will have every symptom.
- Sensory processing can vary from day to day or moment to moment.
- Child will probably have difficulty with more than one input.
- No two children are alike.

Suggestions for one of the most common SPDs: Tactile Avider

Breakout Session on
Vestibular Seeker
(another most common SPD)

Tactile Avider (Tactile Defensiveness)

- Most common type of Sensory Avoidance
- Brain says “Ouch” to everyday touch experiences



A TACTILE AVOIDER may:

- Respond to light or unexpected touch in negative manner or with excessive emotions i.e. hitting, biting, crying, screaming or running away.
- Avoid messy experiences.
- Be an Extremely Picky eater.
- Refuse to hold hands with someone else.
- Not like to be kissed or hugged.
- Talk his way out of touching.

Suggestions for Tactile Aiders

- Establish Trust with the child!
- DO NOT FORCE CHILD TO TOUCH the material



Suggestions for Tactile Aiders:



- When introducing a messy learning activity:
 - Explain what is going to occur
 - Model playful interactions
 - Be patient

Suggestions for Tactile Aiders

- Prevent unexpected touches when possible
- Allow child to initiate the touch
- Introduce one tactile input at a time (Ex. Not rice AND beans)

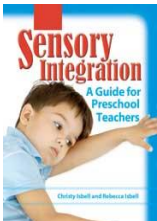
Suggestions for Tactile Avoiders



- Make external environment less stimulating
- Decrease lighting and noise (your voice)

When/How to Refer:

- If Problems are impacting child's function in learning environment
- Early Diagnosis and Intervention is very important!
- Talk with parents- share observations.
- Refer to Occupational Therapy, Child Psychologist, or Developmental Pediatrician



Information for this presentation taken from:

Isbell, C. & Isbell, R. (2007). *Sensory Integration: A Guide for Preschool Teachers*. Baltimore, MD: Gryphon House.

www.Amazon.com

Websites for More Info:

- www.SPDFoundation.net
- www.sensory-processing-disorder.com
- www.out-of-sync-child.com
- www.SIglobalnetwork.org

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