Why can't he sit still? A Sensory Integration Approach for the “Overactive” Young Child

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Vestibular (Movement and Balance) Seeker

› Most common type of Sensory Seeking Disorder
› Brain says “GIVE ME MORE” movement!
› Child craves and seeks more movement than typical children

A Vestibular Seeker may:
› Be unable to sit still
› Be in constant motion
› Ex. swaying, bouncing, fidgeting, wiggling, or pacing
› Take safety risks
› Be impulsive
› Run instead of walk
› Look like a child who has ADD!
› Some children who are Vestibular Seekers have ADD, but not all of them do!

Vestibular Seeker vs. Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD/ADD)
› 2 different neurological disorders
› Estimated 40%–60% of children with one disorder have symptoms of the other
› Preliminary research indicates that 1 in 4 children are misdiagnosed with ADHD when they actually have Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)
› www.SPDFoundation.net

Information taken from:
› Available on Amazon.com

The Result is... An “Overactive” Child

Vestibular (Movement) Seeker

› Vestibular Seeker’s brain tells his body to move so that he can stay alert and attentive and LEARN!

› The Result is... An “Overactive” Child
What can we do to help the overactive child in the classroom?

You’ve Got to MOVE to LEARN!!!!!!

Preschool and Child Care Research

- Observational Study
- 88% of day NO active play opportunities
- Of active play opportunities, only 14% was moderate–vigorous physical activity
- Most moderate–vigorous physical activity was outside
- Preschoolers have significantly fewer opportunities for physical activity than recommended
  (Tandon, Saelens, Christakis, 2015)

Tools for the Overactive Child:

- SUV Gas Principle
- Takes a lot of movement to fill up this child’s tank!
- Movement experiences help PREVENT challenging behaviors!

Evidence-Based Research

- 20 minutes of walking before taking a test
- Improved scores
  Dr. Charles Hillman, University of Illinois
  www.iom.edu/studentbody

- Alternate active and quiet learning activities.
- Center–based Environment
- Large motor activity INSIDE or OUTSIDE
  - One hour a day is best!
  - You can break this up.


Evidence-Based Research

- Texas Christian University– 15 minutes of recess 4x’s a day
- Improved Learning
Evidence-Based Recommendations

- [http://www.readandride.org](http://www.readandride.org)
- More time on bikes = Increase in reading proficiency on standardized tests.

Movement Breaks: Every 25 minutes

- Walk
- Jump up and down
- Bounce on a therapy ball
- Mini Trampoline
- Dance
- Spin

CHANGE THE ACTIVITIES on REGULAR BASIS: So child’s brain will not become accustomed

BIG Movement Transitions

- Animal Walks
- Hop
- Skip
- March
- Stomp
- Wiggle
- Fly

Group Activity: Brainstorming

- Think of one “Movement Break” or “Big Movement Transition” experience.
- Be creative
- Be ready to share!

BREATHE

- Need to transition from moving to quiet
- 4 Deep Breaths: In through nose/out through mouth - “Smell the flowers”
- Bunny Breaths
- Snake Breaths
- Elephant Breaths
- Lion roars

Positioning Options for Learning:

- Sit on cushion in chair
- Sit on therapy ball at table
- Sit in rocking chair at circle

Help Children Understand Individual Differences.
Give Children a couple of rules for use.
Evidence-Based Recommendations!

- Texas A & M—Standing Desks for students with ADHD
  - [http://neatoday.org/2014/11/05/standing-desks-are-helping-students-think-on-their-feet/](http://neatoday.org/2014/11/05/standing-desks-are-helping-students-think-on-their-feet/)

Evidence-Based Recommendations
Therapy Cushions

- Umeda & Deitz (2011)

Evidence-Based Recommendations
Therapy Ball Chairs

- Bagatell, Mirigliani, Patterson, Reyes & Test (2010)

All Children Benefit from Movement, but “Overactive” Children Benefit the Most!

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