



Sensory Processing Policy

Sensory Processing

Children with autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) tend to exhibit significantly different patterns of sensory processing to their peers and to children with other special educational needs (SEN).

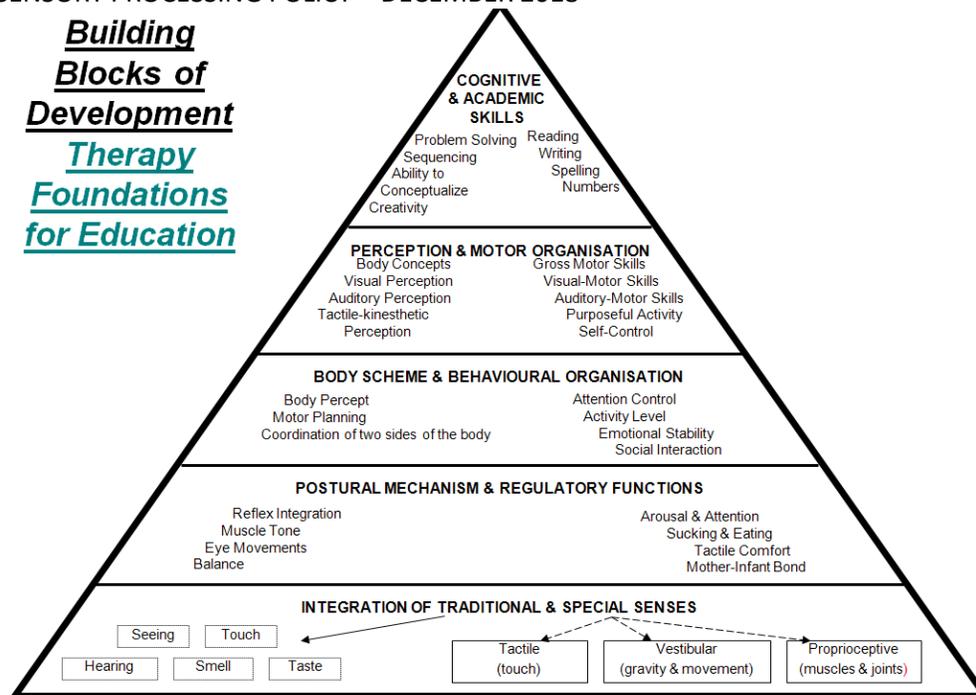
It is estimated that 60 to 70 per cent of children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) present with sensory modulation/processing disorder (Adamson, 2006). Studies have shown that people with autism are slower to integrate inputs coming in from their senses, making their processing speed much slower. This may go some way towards explaining why children with ASD are often subject to “meltdowns”. Children with autism lack the appropriate “filters” to screen out irrelevant information and this can cause meltdown as each input builds and builds without being filtered out appropriately.

Occupational performance difficulties due to sensory modulation challenges or poor integration of sensation can result from difficulties in how the nervous system receives, organizes, and uses sensory information from the body and the physical environment for self-regulation, motor planning, and skill development. These problems impact self-concept, emotional regulation, attention, problem solving, behavior control, skill performance, and the capacity to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships. In children, they may negatively impact the ability to engage, play, develop school skills, and develop long term independence skills.

The triangle below shows the required skills in order to gain academic learning within the educational environment:

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Blocks of
Development
Therapy
Foundations
for Education



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Our mission at Tracks Autism is to identify the underlying sensory difficulties which are impacting upon the development of essential motor and academic skills. We have a Highly Specialist Occupational Therapist who is trained in both Advanced Neurodevelopmental and Sensory Integration who supports with this.

The Occupational Therapist role within this is to:

1. Provide training and support to the staff in order to identify and respond to the child's needs, and to assist them with developing skills.
2. Assist with environmental modifications to support sensory needs.
3. Identify through the use of the Sensory Profile 2 (Standardised Assessment) the child's current sensory needs.
4. Identify sensory needs through observation within the classroom environment.
5. Provision of specialist equipment to support the identified sensory needs.
6. Support parents to identify and support the child's sensory needs within the home and community environment.
7. Support the development of a sensory diet for each child. The effects of a sensory diet can be immediate AND cumulative:
 - they actually help to restructure a child's nervous system over time so that they are better able to tolerate sensations and situations they find challenging/distracting.
 - they assist the child to regulate their alertness and increase attention span

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- they limit sensory seeking and sensory avoiding behaviours and handle transitions with less stress.
 - This allows the child to focus on the task in hand, rather than for example being distracted by stimuli such as, their shirt label rubbing on their neck or the smell of the hand cream, a noise outside and/or being bumped in the corridor.
8. Set-up and continual development of Sensory Circuits that helps children achieve a “ready to learn” state. Sensory circuits are a series of activities designed specifically to wake up all the senses. They are a great way to energise or settle children into the day. Each session includes:
- alerting activities (e.g. spinning, bouncing on a gym ball, skipping, star jumps) to stimulate the body's central nervous system in preparation for learning
 - organising activities (e.g. balancing on a wobble board, log rolling, juggling etc.) which demand brain and body to work together.
 - calming activities (heavy muscle work and deep pressure e.g. wall pushes, push ups, using weights) to give an awareness of their body in space and increases the ability to self-regulate sensory input.

The Staff's role within this is to:

1. Through the use of training be able to identify sensory and motor difficulties which are impacting upon the child's engagement and learning.
2. Implement a sensory diet and circuit to support the child to be at the 'just right' state to engage within the environment.
3. Implement the sensory diet and circuit and be able to identify when the child's routine requires adapting, and identify this to the Occupational Therapist.
4. Support the family to identify the current needs, and support required within the home and community environment.

Recommended books for Parents / Carers:

- *The Out-of-Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping With Sensory Processing Disorder* by Carol Kranowicz (2005)
- *Growing an In-Sync Child: Simple, Fun Activities to Help Every Child Develop, Learn, and Grow* by Carol Kranowicz (2010)
- *Raising a Sensory Smart Child: The Definitive Handbook for Helping Your Child with Sensory Processing Disorder* by Nancy Peske (2009)
- *Sensational Kids: Hope and Help for Children with Sensory Processing Disorder* by Lucy Jane Miller (2007)