

Sensory Processing Issues: Strategies to Use At Home

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What is Sensory Processing?

Sensory Processing: How the nervous system receives input from the senses and turns input into appropriate motor and behavioral responses.

- Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)
 - Spectrum

Sensory vs. Behavior

Breaking It Down:

- **Over-responsive**
 - Avoiders (hypersensitive, low threshold for sensory input)
- **Under-responsive**
 - Seekers (hyposensitive, high threshold for sensory input)
- 7 senses:
 - **Visual, Auditory, Olfactory, Taste, Tactile**
 - **Vestibular** = sense of movement
 - **Proprioception** = sense of “body awareness”

Sensorimotor Strategies:

- **Visual Strategies**

- Turning lights on or off
- Visual “blocking”
- Consider the environment (color, distractions, clutter)

- **Auditory Strategies**

- Listening to music
 - Modifying volume, tempo (upbeat vs slow)
- Natural sounds (outside, nature)
- Noise cancelling headphones
- Giving control over noise

Sensorimotor Strategies:

- **Olfactory Strategies**

- Consider the environment
- Aromatherapy

- **Taste Strategies**

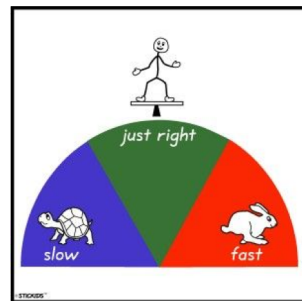
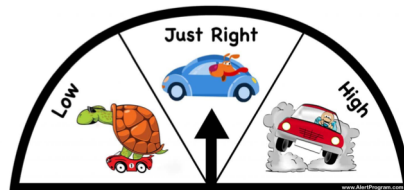
- Sucking on a straw
- Crunch, chew, pull
- Sour candy

Sensorimotor Strategies:

- **Tactile Strategies**
 - Light touch vs deep touch
 - “Messy play”
- **Vestibular Strategies = sense of movement**
 - Swing, spin, roll
 - Cartwheels, jumping jacks
- **Proprioceptive Strategies = sense of body awareness**
 - Lifting, Pushing, Pulling
 - Heavy work (see “additional heavy work activities for home” slides)

Commonly Used “Sensory” Language & Frameworks

- **The Alert program ®**
 - “How does your engine run?”
 - High, low, just right “engine”



- **The Zones of Regulation**
 - “Red, Yellow, Green, Blue” zones



Sensory Diets

- A sensory diet is a group of activities used to help improve a person's attention, arousal and adaptive response to sensory input
- An ideal sensory diet is:
 - Individualized
 - Used proactively
 - Includes functional activities
 - Meets a “just-right challenge”

Highlights:

- The ability to “self-regulate” requires a lot of self-reflection and awareness
- Sensorimotor strategies are NOT one size fits all
- Proactive sensory input throughout the day is optimal
- The best sensory activities are functional and easy to carryover in many different environments
- Individuals should be active participants in all sensory activities
 - They do the activity, not done for them

Additional Proprioceptive/Heavy Work Strategies for Home:

Opening and holding doors for others

Chair push ups or chair “dips”

Push against a wall

Fall or “crashing” into a beanbag chair

Slowly roll a ball, bolster or cushion over the child, applying pressure

Having a child bounce on a Hippity Hop ball

Sandwich games (child is placed between beanbags, sofa cushions, mattresses and light pressure is applied to top layer and child has to escape)

Play catch with a heavy ball

Bounce and roll a heavy ball

Animal walks (crab walk, bear walk, army crawl)

Play "row, row, row your boat" both sitting on the floor, pushing and pulling each other

Theraputty

Jumping on a mini trampoline

Stacking chairs

Two children can play "tug of war" with jump rope or heavy theraband. (If you use the theraband, children need supervision so they don't purposely let go of theraband and "snap" the other child)

Additional Proprioceptive/Heavy Work Strategies for Home:

Carry heavy items when walking places (box of blocks, groceries, a backpack, etc.)

Take the cushions off the sofas, vacuum under them, then put them back. Can also climb on them, hide under them, jump and "crash" into them, play sandwich games with them

Pull other kids around on a sheet or blanket

Pull a heavy trash can

Yard work including raking grass/leaves, pushing a child's wheelbarrow

Housework including dusting, vacuuming and mopping, carrying buckets of water to clean with or to water flowers/plants/trees

Child can help rearrange his/her bedroom furniture

Have child put large toys and equipment away

Wipe off the table after dinner

Suck applesauce through a straw, eating a "Go-gurt" like product that requires sucking through the package

Scrub rough surfaces with a brush

Pillow fights

Have the child "help" by pushing in chairs to a table

After a bath, parents can squeeze child and rub him/her briskly with a towel

Use heavy quilts at night and tight flannel pajamas

Swimming. Also, have child dive after weighted sticks thrown in pool

Additional Proprioceptive/Heavy Work Strategies for Home:

Dancing

Activities such as gymnastics, horseback riding, wrestling, karate

Wash the car, or having child carry buckets of water to help wash car

Carry the laundry basket

Jump or climb in inner tubes

Fill up a child's suitcase with heavy items (such as books) and push/pull the suitcase across the room

When travelling, let child pull own small suitcase on wheels

Go "shopping" with a child's shopping cart filled with items

Child can help change the sheets on the bed, then toss the linens down the stairs

Go "camping" with a heavy blanket pulled across a few chairs. Child can help set up and take down the blanket

Sports activities involving running and jumping; walking up a ramp or incline

Have the child color a "rainbow" with large paper on the floor or with sidewalk chalk outside while child is on his/her hands and knees

"Hot dog" game where child lies across end of a blanket and is rolled (ends up inside the rolled up blanket with head outside)

Play wrestling: pushing game where two people lock hands facing each other and try to see who can push and make the other person step back first. Use other body parts also, but be sure to have rules (no hitting, no biting, no scratching, one person says stop then both stop)

Questions & Answers

- Thank you for your attention and participation!
- Please write questions into chat feature and let us know of additional topics you would like covered
- For copies of slides, please email:
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Resources on Sensory Activities and COVID-19

Autism Society of Oregon, Recipes for DIY Sensory Tools

<http://autismsocietyoregon.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Sensory-booklet.pdf>

Special Mom Advocate, 42 Sensory Crafts for Kids with Autism, SPD and ADHD

<https://www.specialmomadvocate.com/sensory-crafts/>