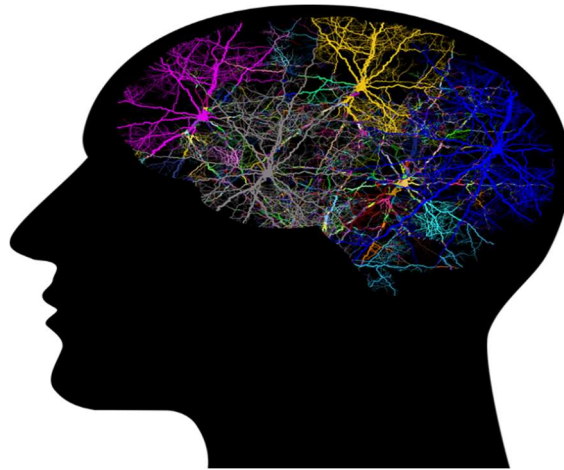




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Strategies for school for children and young people with Sensory Processing Difficulties



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SENSORY PROCESSING DIFFICULTIES AND SCHOOL

What is Sensory Processing?



Sensory processing: This is the ability to organise information from the different sensory systems in order to respond appropriately. It is an automatic response, which helps us to cope with all the demands of the daily environment.

All of the information we receive about the world comes to us from our senses of taste, smell, sight, sound from our sense of touch, movement, the force of gravity and body position.

All of our senses have receptors that pick up information for our brain to put together and understand. Cells in our skin send information about light touch, pain, temperature and pressure. Our inner ear detects movement and changes in the position of our head. Receptors in our muscles, tendons and joints give us awareness of our body position and receptors in our internal organs tells us about our internal state e.g. if we are hungry, thirsty or need to use the toilet.

Children and young people can be over responsive (hyper-responsive) or under responsive (hypo-responsive) to information from the 8 sensory systems in the body which include: Tactile, Proprioception, Vestibular, Auditory, Visual, Oral, Olfactory, Interoception systems.

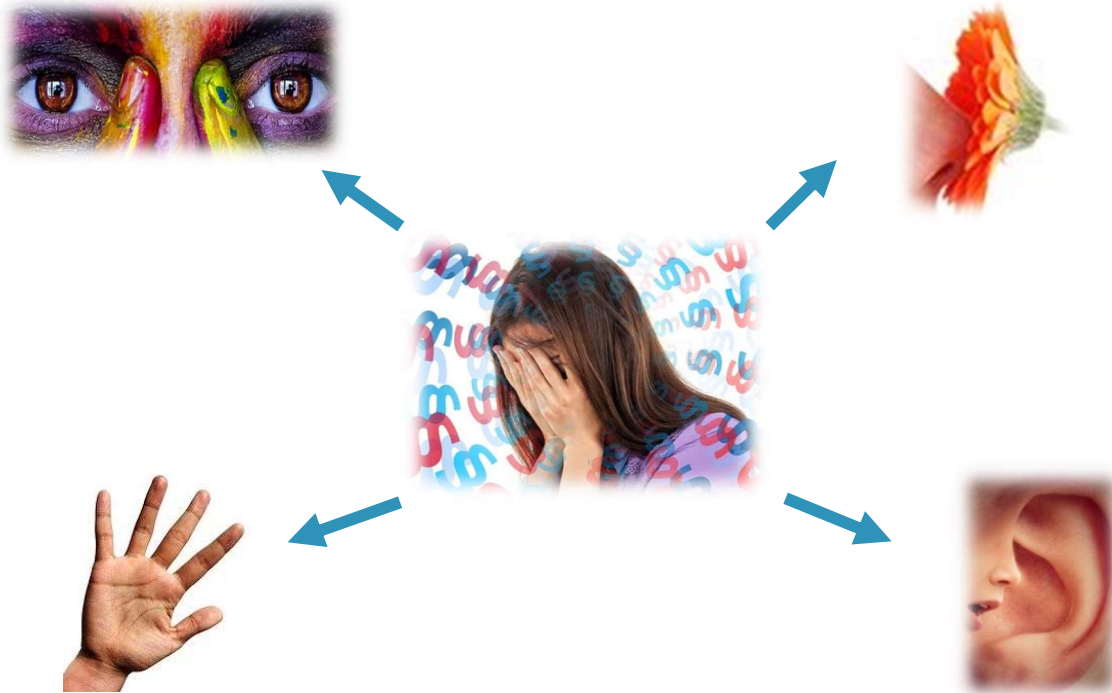
A child/young person may present as being under responsive to one or more senses and over responsive to others. Their experience will vary and their sensitivities may increase if they are anxious or in a heightened state.

Sensory Modulation: this is the ability of the brain to balance incoming sensory information, to decide on what sensory information is important to attend, respond to and filter out. It assists the person to remain at an appropriate level of alertness to learn, to control behaviour and complete daily activities.

The majority of children who present with Sensory Processing Difficulties (SPD), particularly those who are over responsive (hyper-responsive) to information from their senses e.g. tactile, auditory (sounds), visual, smells etc. may find it difficult to cope in school and can experience sensory overload or “shutdown”.

Sometimes a child/young person can react negatively e.g. if a child is over responsive to information from the tactile system (touch) they can be irritated by their clothing, experience

touch as uncomfortable or painful and may lash out at others, they may struggle to stand in line or be in close proximity of others e.g. in busy corridors.



Children/young people who are over responsive to the auditory system (sounds) may easily be distracted from sounds in the environment and may struggle to focus. They can experience some sounds as being uncomfortable or painful e.g. high pitch noises. They may struggle in environments where more than one person is talking and often struggle to filter out background noise.

For those who are under responsive (hypo-responsive) to proprioception and to the vestibular system they may seek sensory input to aid self-regulation. This can present as being fidgety, and not having the ability to sit still.

This booklet aims to provide strategies that can be used in school to make it less stressful for children/young people with sensory processing difficulties and enable them to focus on the curriculum and their learning.



Tactile Systems

Over Responsive (Hyper-responsive) to Touch

Children who are over responsive to the tactile system (touch) can experience touch as uncomfortable and sometimes painful.



Children and young people can be irritated by their clothing; soft touch; by people or their clothing brushing past them; they may dislike getting their hands dirty and engaging in messy play etc. Furthermore, they can become anxious or fearful of being touched if in close proximity of others e.g. when standing in line, sitting during circle time, when in busy environments.

The following strategies can help reduce children/young people in school:

- ✓ Clothing – allow the child to adapt their school uniform to clothing that they are able to tolerate e.g. soft cottons, fleece materials, wearing a polo shirt without the school logo.
- ✓ Shoes – children who are over responsive to information from the tactile system can struggle to tolerate socks and shoes on their feet. Consider allowing them to wear soft mesh type trainers, canvas shoes or crocs that are easier for them to tolerate.
- ✓ Standing in line – encourage the child/young person to stand at the front or back of the line or consider allowing them to enter the classroom a few minutes before their peers.
- ✓ Circle time – encourage the child to sit at the end of the row with sufficient space between peers so others do not brush against them or bump into them. Allow them to sit on a soft mat or blanket if they are irritated by the texture of the carpet.
- ✓ Corridors - consider allowing the child to access the corridors at quieter times or a few minutes before their peers. If appropriate, reduce un-necessary exposure to touch by placing the child's coat peg at the end of the row or in a less crowded area.
- ✓ For young children engaging in messy play, use dry ingredients and gradually introduce wet substances that can be more difficult to tolerate. Consider allowing them to engage in these activities for short periods of time and allow them to wash their hands when they have finished.

Hints and Tips:

For children who demonstrate significant adverse reactions to messy play, try deep pressure massage on their hands or try encouraging them to press their hands firmly together, press hands firmly on the tabletop or complete press-ups against the wall. These activities may help with desensitising the hands.

Under Responsive (Hypo-responsive) to Touch

Children and young people who are under responsive to touch may seek tactile input through touching and feeling textured surfaces which provide strong tactile feedback.



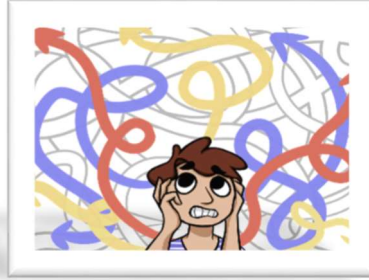
They may not notice that someone has touched or bumped into them; notice that their face and hands are dirty or that their clothes are twisted, clothes are inside out or they have their shoes on the wrong feet etc. Children who are under responsive to information from the tactile system may crave touch and may touch other pupils or objects repeatedly. They can often drop items and may struggle with fine motor skills e.g. holding a pencil or over grip a pencil and use too much pressure during handwriting activities etc.

The following strategies can help:

- ✓ To gain the child's/young person's attention by saying their name or use visual cues.
- ✓ Provide the child with opportunities to engage in deep pressure activities, running, bouncing, climbing, using a trampoline, crawling, using playground equipment, wall press-ups, swimming etc. Secondary school children may want to use gym equipment. This will aid self-regulation and assist in the development of Proprioceptive and Vestibular processing.
- ✓ To increase tactile input, play hand games e.g. clapping games, Tic-tac-toe, Rock paper scissors, hand stacking game etc.
- ✓ Allow the child to have opportunities to explore rough textured surfaces e.g. stickle bricks, scouring pads, rough surfaces, sand paper, salt dough.
- ✓ Encourage messy play that includes dry substances and rough textures such as rice, couscous, lentils, pasta, sand etc. Prompt them to make a collage with textured items.
- ✓ Encourage the child to wash their hands with textured soap.
- ✓ Use tactile materials for curriculum topics.
- ✓ Trial using a textured pencil grip on pencils, handwriting and drawing utensils.
- ✓ Allow the child to fidget with moveable and tactile objects as this may help them focus and provide tactile feedback to the fingers.

Hints and tips: Items that could be used are fidget cubes, textured fidgets e.g. pickle fidget, pencil toppers, spikey or bead textured balls, pocket size finger exerciser, squeeze grip resistance balls, Velcro or blue tac etc.

Auditory Sensitivity (over responsive)



Children who are sensitive to sounds can experience certain sounds as uncomfortable or even as painful.

They struggle to filter out background noise and can hear auditory sounds at the same level. They can be distracted easily by sounds in the environment and may hear things that other people may not hear.

The following are a list of activities and strategies that which can be used to assist in reducing auditory sensitivity in different environments for the child in school.

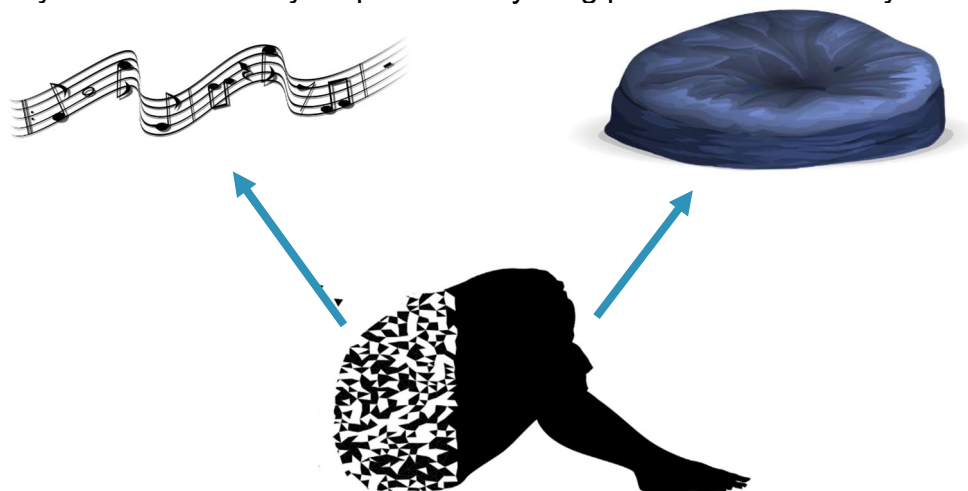
- ✓ It helps to be aware of the child's/young person's sensitivity when introducing them to new or unfamiliar environments particularly if they are loud i.e. school hall and dining room. It can help if you prepare the child/young person for this experience by gradually introducing them to the environment and allowing them time to get used to the noise. The more familiar and safe the environment feels to the child/young person the better they will be able to cope with their auditory sensitivity.
- ✓ Consider allowing the child/young person to wear headphones or noise cancelling headphones particularly in noisy environments such as the dining room or school hall.



- ✓ Using noise-cancelling headphones in busy environments can help filter out background noise. It is important to consider that headphones or noise cancelling headphones should not be worn all of the time. Younger children may benefit from wearing headphones, ear defenders or a tight hat pulled down over the ears when they are in the playground as this can help to dampen down noise.
- ✓ Reduce background noise whenever possible and avoid sitting the child near equipment which emit noise e.g. projectors or under buzzing lights.
- ✓ Whenever possible provide a quite calm environment. Play calm music to cover a particularly noisy period in the classroom i.e. when adjusting desks for lessons or when moving from one activity to another. This can help pupils remain calm and relaxed and

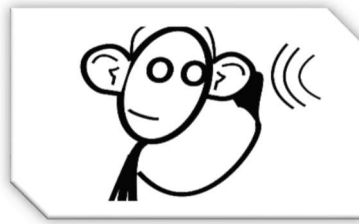
keep noise levels down. Lifting furniture instead of dragging it can also help as can a carpeted surface in a classroom.

- ✓ Be aware of your tone and pitch of your voice. Whenever possible speak to the child/young person in a calm soothing voice. Be particularly aware of not raising your voice, particularly if the child/young person is already distressed, as this will only contribute to the chaos going on inside their heads. If the child is distressed, they may not be able to process what you are saying. It can sometimes help to write down or show a picture to indicate what you want them to do.
- ✓ Allow the child/young person opportunities to escape from areas they find noisy and distressing e.g. the school hall or dining area. Removing the child from the environment can break the pattern and allow them time to calm before returning. Whenever possible build up tolerance to new environments before removing the child but be aware of levels of distress and remove them if possible before the behaviour spirals out of control.
- ✓ Often children/young people who are sensitive to sounds, struggle with the sounds of hand dryers. Consider allowing them to access the toilets at quiet times and make paper towels available for hand drying. Alternatively, encourage the child/young person to use the single use toilet.
- ✓ Whenever possible provide a quiet dark area removed from the classroom for the child/young person to go to calm down. This could be a curtained area/large box, side room, den, pop up tent etc. The use of a soft carpet, a couple of beanbags or cushions, soft lighting and soothing music e.g. Mozart or recorded “white noise” can help the child/young person to calm. Give the child/young person a certain measurable time in this environment before encouraging them to return to class or activity.
- ✓ Giving clear concise instructions in a calm soothing voice can assist the child/young person to block out background noise and to focus on what is being said. Encouraging them to look at you or in your direction when you speak and asking them to repeat what you have said may help the child/young person to attend to your request.



- ✓ Try to avoid over complex sentences and whenever possible link the conversation to what is happening now as the child/young person may not always understand the concept of time and may be confused by what is said. Try not to give too many instructions at once, break down the activity to make it less complicated.

Auditory System (Under-Responsive)



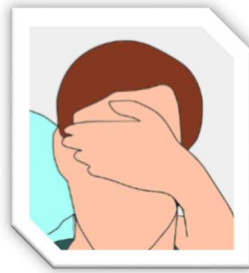
Children/young people with an under responsive reaction to information from the Auditory system can find it difficult to process information and to understand what is being said or asked of them. This involves more than a sense of hearing, the child/young person needs to be able to discriminate between different sounds, to decode sounds and to remember what is being said.

The child/young person may present as confused or inattentive. They may start to complete a task without fully understanding what is expected of them. They may take a long time before they respond to their name or to instructions. The following are a number of strategies to assist the child/young person in developing auditory processing.

- ✓ Touching the child/young person on the shoulder before issuing an instruction can help them to focus. It is important to be aware if the child/young person has any tactile sensitivity issues prior to doing so as they may experience touch as uncomfortable or painful.
- ✓ Encourage the child/young person to look in your direction to ensure that you have gained their attention.
- ✓ Don't overload the child with instructions that are complex, instead break them down into stages and give one instruction at a time.
- ✓ Use short clear concise phrases and repeat instructions if necessary.
- ✓ Ensure that the child/young person has correctly heard and understood the instructions by asking him/her to repeat them before attempting the task.
- ✓ Whenever possible remove other auditory distractions from the environment.
- ✓ Give physical prompts or demonstrations to back up verbal instructions.
- ✓ Some children/young people respond better to a multi-sensory approach to instructions i.e. they are supported by pictures, symbols, objects, writing etc. especially if they are left on display for him/her to refer to them.

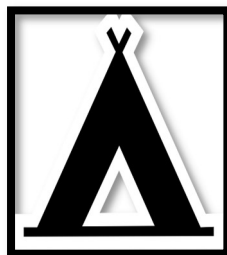


Visual system (Over – responsiveness)



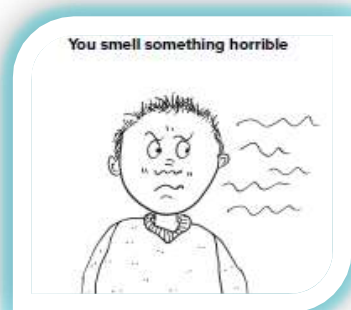
The following are a list of activities and strategies that could be used to assist the child/young person in reducing visual sensitivity and to assist them in attending in different environments.

- ✓ It helps to be aware that the child/young person can experience visual overload when introduced to environments that are bright or have busy walls, fluctuating lights i.e. flashing lights, strobe lighting etc.
- ✓ It can help if you prepare the child/young person for this experience by gradually introducing him/her to the environment and allowing them time to get used to the light. The more familiar and safe the child is in the environment the better they will be able to cope.
- ✓ Provide the child/young person with a visual scale that indicates when they are becoming distressed by light.
- ✓ Encourage the child/young person to sit away from windows, busy walkways and where possible avoid sitting them under direct lighting and in front of busy or bright coloured walls. If possible, turn off fluorescent lighting and use natural light or softer lighting.
- ✓ If the child/young person is sensitive to white paper, trial using pastel coloured paper.
- ✓ Reduce the brightness on Ipad and/or computer screens. Ensure that light from the window or electric lighting is not reflecting on the screen.
- ✓ Consider allowing the child/young person to wear tinted glasses or sunglasses (if they will tolerate them). A sun visor/peaked cap may help the child/young person cope with a particularly bright environment or when they are in the playground on bright days.
- ✓ Allow the child/young person opportunities to escape from areas he/she finds too bright and distressing but gradually build up his/her tolerance by encouraging him/her to spend time in the environment gradually.



- ✓ Whenever possible provide the child/young person with a safe dark space to escape from bright lights. This could be provided by using a large box with a blanket over the entrance, a quiet room with subdued lighting, a space in the classroom that is curtained off to shutout the bright lights, or a space under the table.
- ✓ Allow the child/young person opportunities to develop/design their own safe spaces or strategies to help them to cope with visual sensitivity.
- ✓ Be aware that the child/young person with visual sensitivity can also be sensitive to sound and or touch and therefore find it difficult to cope in environments that are bright, loud and that have several people moving around, e.g. busy corridors etc. They may attempt to exit these areas if they are struggling to cope particularly if they become anxious or lose their sense of direction.

Olfactory System (Sense of Smell)



Children and young people with sensory processing difficulties may be sensitive to smells.

It would be helpful for you to be aware that children/young people who are over responsive to smells (Olfactory System) can struggle to tolerate certain smells e.g. perfumes, aftershave, deodorants etc. and notice smells which others do not. They may struggle to access environments with strong odours such as the school dining room, school toilets, science laboratory etc. and may feel nauseous and irritated by smells.

- ✓ They can become distracted by smells in the classroom and other environments and may become overwhelmed by smells others do not find unpleasant.
- ✓ Make the environment as fragrance free as possible i.e. refrain from using air fresheners and scented products.
- ✓ Allow the child/young person opportunities to escape from smells he/she finds distressing.
- ✓ Allow the child/young person to use a scent they prefer on a tissue/handkerchief/material to mask unpleasant smells and odours.
- ✓ Seat the child/young person away from bins or objects which produce strong odours.
- ✓ Keep rooms well ventilated, especially when using strong smelling materials – allow the child/young person to sit beside an open window.

- ✓ During meal times, allow the child/young person to sit by an open window or allow them him/her to sit in alternative room.



- ✓ Consider allowing the child/young person to use the single use toilet/Disabled toilet if they are unable to tolerate the smells in the toilet blocks.

Proprioception



Proprioception is the awareness of our body position in space. Tiny receptors located in the muscles joints and ligaments send messages to the brain as to whether the muscles are stretching or contracting, or if the joints are bent or straight. Proprioception provides us with information on where a particular body part is without the need for visual cues.

Proprioception (under-responsive)

The child/young person with reduced proprioception has difficulty interpreting the messages as the exact location of their head and limbs and can have difficulty planning their movement. Often they can present as uncoordinated or clumsy and can trip or fall for no apparent reason or fall from their chair. They may bump into other children or things unintentionally.

Children/young people with reduced proprioception can also present as being heavy-handed and/or heavy-footed and will not understand their own strength. They struggle to gauge how much force is needed for a task i.e. opening/closing a door, throwing a ball, applying the appropriate amount of pressure on handwriting/drawing utensils, rip the paper when erasing. They may have an extremely high tolerance of pain relating to muscle or bone injuries.

Children/young people with sensory processing difficulties can become easily overwhelmed and can struggle to focus on the curriculum.

Activities, which provide Proprioception e.g. heavy work exercises will increase the child's/young person's awareness of their body position, will aid calming and self-regulation.

Proprioceptive input will also increase the child's/young person's attention, focus and alertness for learning and help them attend curricular activities.

They would benefit from engaging in activities, which provide proprioception regularly throughout the day and in particular before they have to sit down for a period of time e.g. circle time, when engaging in tabletop activities or listening to a classroom presentation, for tests or exams etc.

Activities to increase proprioceptive

Input in the classroom may include the whole class or the child/young person individually



Jumping – jumping on the spot; jumping jacks; spotty dog (jumping with opposite arm and leg extended); jumping on a mini trampoline, marching on the spot (for younger children use songs such as “Ants go Marching One by One, counting songs etc.), aerobic type exercises, yoga poses.

Chair-Push-ups – place hands on the side of the seat of the chair, push up with the arms lifting bottom off the chair for 2 – 4 seconds and lower back down. Repeat.

Wall Push-ups – Standing with legs apart, place hands on a wall and lean into the wall and push back. Repeat.

Carrying heavy objects - sharing out books or I-Pads, sharing out the morning milk or fruit, help with the recycling

Bear hugs – encourage the child/children to wrap their arms around their chest and knees and give themselves a firm hug.

Encourage the child/young person to:

- ✓ Wipe the whiteboard applying pressure when wiping.
- ✓ Move classroom chairs or stack chairs if applicable.
- ✓ Sit in a beanbag to read a book or complete an activity on an I-Pad
- ✓ Lie in prone (on stomach) on the floor to complete a jigsaw, look at a book, match cards, play a board game etc.
- ✓ With supervision, encourage the child to pull on resistance bands.
- ✓ For primary aged children -Trial the child with a wedge shaped, move n sit cushion - ensure that the cushion is not over-inflated and does not overlap the seat of the chair. For stability, the child will need to be able to place their feet flat on the floor or feet supported by a step or box.
- ✓ Provide regular movement breaks throughout the day e.g. allow them to move tables, get a drink, do some wall push ups, walk to the toilet etc.

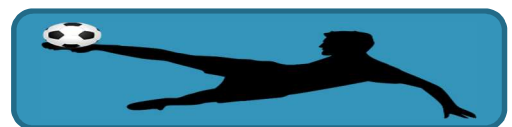
- ✓ It is also important to allow the child/young person to engage in activities, which provide oral proprioception this will aid calming and reduce chewing on non-food items e.g. clothing. For oral proprioception, allow the child to drink through a straw or sports bottle, chew on hard foods e.g. raw carrots, breadsticks, dried fruit, jerky or chew on pencil toppers etc. Encourage the child to engage in blowing activities e.g. an instrument, bubbles, play blow football, engage in mouth exercises.



Playground Activities for Proprioception:

Encourage the child/young person to:

- ✓ Run around the yard or run the “school mile”.
- ✓ Engage in a Tug of War; pull on a rope tied securely to a climbing frame or tree etc.
- ✓ Play a game of Hopscotch or tag, chasing games, skipping etc.
- ✓ Climbing - use the climbing frame, monkey bars, climbing wall.
- ✓ Set up an obstacle course - commando crawl or crabwalk across exercise mats, crawl through a tunnel, jump over low hurdles.
- ✓ Use scooter boards, encourage the child to pull themselves along the floor with their arms or pull a child on a scooter board with a rope.
- ✓ Play catch with large balls such as gym balls/exercise balls or heavier balls such as a basketball. Kick a football. Throw heavy beanbags at a target.
- ✓ Dig the garden and planting, moving soil in buckets or a small wheelbarrow, rake leaves.
- ✓ Encourage the child to help carry play equipment e.g. balls, mats, skittles.



Interoception (internal sense)

Interoception is the sensory system that allows us to understand and feel what is happening inside our bodies. Interoception enables us to identify when we are cold, hot, tired, hungry, thirsty or full and when we need to use the toilet. It also helps us to identify when we feel nauseous, feel pain and other sensation such as how fast our heart is beating and our breathing rate etc.



Interoception also allows us to feel our emotions e.g. when we are anxious, excited, angry etc. It helps us to control our emotional states and enables our bodies to stay in a state of optimal balance (homeostasis). It also allows us to understand the physical and emotional cues of others.

Children/young people with sensory processing difficulties may be under responsive or over responsive to interoceptive input. Those who are under responsive to information from interoception may not be aware of their internal state or may have some internal sensations but have difficulty in recognising where these sensations are coming from, can confuse sensations or may not recognise them until these sensations are intense.

Children/young people who are over reactive to interoception can be extremely sensitive to and over react to interoceptive sensations. They can be easily distracted or preoccupied by their internal sensations and may struggle to stay on task. They can become overwhelmed by these sensations and may exhibit anxiety or negative behaviours e.g. meltdowns, outbursts.

Strategies to support children/young people who are under responsive to Interoception



- ✓ For teaching staff to be aware that Children/young people who are under responsive to information from interoception may not recognise that they need the toilet or may not recognise they need to use the toilet until the very last minute when their internal feelings may be more intense. They may have wetting or soiling accidents. Allow the child/young person to access the toilet when they recognise that they need to use the toilet. They may benefit from having a school “toilet pass”.

- ✓ Encourage/prompt the child/young person to access the toilet at regular intervals throughout the day.
- ✓ Be aware that children/young people who have poor feedback from interoception struggle to regulate their temperature. Prompt the child/young person to dress appropriately to the weather e.g. remove their coat, jumper, cardigan during hot weather if they appear hot. Encourage them to put on items of clothing during cold weather etc.
- ✓ Be aware that the child/young person may struggle to identify and regulate their emotions and may exhibit extreme emotions without being aware of the build-up. Allow them opportunities to access a quiet place to calm.
- ✓ To aid self-regulation and improve body awareness encourage the child/young person to engage in Yoga, Mindfulness, breathing exercises and activities that provide proprioception e.g. pulling, pushing, carrying heavy objects, jumping, running, press-ups etc. (see information under proprioception for other ideas).



Interoception – (Over responsive)

- ✓ Be aware that a child who is over responsive to interoception may be extremely sensitive to their internal senses e.g. the slightest sensation of hunger, thirst, or toileting needs. This may cause them to become extremely anxious.
- ✓ The child/young person may get easily distracted or anxious about the slightest change in their body temperature, hearing their own heartbeat, the feel of their digestive system etc. They may experience internal sensation as uncomfortable or intensely painful.
- ✓ The child/young person may experience pain as extreme.

To aid self-regulation and improve body awareness encourage the child/young person to engage in Yoga, Mindfulness, breathing exercises and activities that provide proprioception e.g. pulling, pushing, carrying heavy objects, jumping, running, press-ups etc.

Reducing Sensory Overload



Children and young people who experience sensory processing difficulties can experience over-stimulation of one or more of the body's senses from the environment and can become overwhelmed. This occurs as the brain receives too much information to be able to process it. Sensory overload may result in the child or young person feeling in discomfort, becoming distressed and/or anxious. These feelings may range from mild to intense.

Sensory overload can affect behaviour and can have a profound effect on a child or young person and may result in them reacting negatively and/or exhibiting challenging behaviour or engaging in self-injurious behaviours. They may also experience "shut down" when their sensory systems shutdown and do not function. This can be unpleasant and often frightening.

Try to identify the triggering situations – keeping a behaviour diary might be useful for this.

- ✓ Encourage the child/young person to engage in activities, which provide proprioception. Engaging in these activities regularly throughout day this will aid self-regulation and help with reducing sensory overload.
- ✓ Consider allowing the child/young person to access a quiet area or safe place where they are able to desensitize and calm e.g. library, reading corner a sensory space. Offer regular sensory breaks throughout the day.
- ✓ Consider reducing sensory inputs by turning bright lights down or off, moving away from loud noises or reducing sounds as much as possible, opening a window if there are strong smells. Ensure that the child/young person has sufficient space so that they can avoid unnecessary touch.
- ✓ When introducing the child to noisy environments e.g. school hall, dining room – to avoid meltdowns or bolting, allow them to sit by the door so that they can have a break in the corridor when they feel overwhelmed. They may prefer to attend for 5 minutes and gradually build up the time.
- ✓ Take extra time to prepare the child/young person for transitioning.

Hints and tips:

Talk in a low calm voice and reduce your movements

Transition into Primary School



- ✓ Use visual supports, social stories (whatever works best with the child) to prepare them for the transition to school. There are a number of suitable social stories available online or from the National Autistic Society or the child's Speech and Language Therapist.
- ✓ Prior to the child starting school, ensure that teaching staff are aware of the child's sensory processing difficulties. Have adequate provision in place to meet these needs e.g. quiet area for calming and desensitisation, move n sit cushion, ear defenders etc.
- ✓ Assess the classroom environment prior to the child starting and identify any possible triggers that may cause sensory difficulties. Alerting staff to these triggers or preparing the child for them, can reduce stress associated with transition.
- ✓ Allow the child to carry out visits to the school prior to their starting date. Make these visits interesting and fun for the child. It is best to start these visits at a time when the school is quiet and then gradually introduce them to noisier and busier times.
- ✓ Familiarise the child with teaching staff. If the child is to have 1-1 support in school, whenever possible introduce the child to this person prior to them starting school.
- ✓ If the child uses a schedule or PECS to communicate, ensure that these are in place prior to them starting school.
- ✓ It can initially be helpful to allow the child to take a favourite toy or comforter with them to school to assist with the transition.



- ✓ Allowing the child to wear a hat pulled over his ears (if tolerated), ear muffs or ear plugs or use noise cancelling headphone to block out sounds when the environment becomes too noisy may be helpful. Ensure that headphones are not used all of the time and that the child has a graded introduction to noisier environments e.g. school hall and dining area.
- ✓ Wearing sunglasses or tinted goggles can reduce the effects of light sensitivity in bright classrooms. Sit the child away from windows and under bright lights. If possible use natural light.

- ✓ Continually monitor the situation and identify potential triggers



Transition from Primary to Secondary School

- Ensure that the additional needs department are aware of the young person's sensory processing difficulties and their Neurodevelopmental Profile (if available) prior to them starting at the high school. All staff who will be teaching the young person should be made aware of the young person's needs. Staff should ensure that they have adequate provision and that structures are in place to meet the young person's needs.
- Be aware of potential triggers for sensory overload e.g. large volumes of people in the corridors, large gyms and assembly areas, large noisy environments such as the school canteen. Odours in areas such as the dining area, toilet blocks, science rooms etc. The sound of hand dryers in the toilets, alarms, sensors etc.
- Where possible provide a structured routine and give the young person advance warning of routine change
- Assess the different classroom and other environments prior to the young person starting and identify any possible triggers that may cause problems. Alerting the staff to these triggers or preparing the young person for them can reduce stress associated with the young person's first visit to the school.
- Allow the young person to visit the school as much as possible prior to starting to help familiarise them with this new environment and to orientate them to different classrooms etc.
- Put a buddy system in place if appropriate.
- For school to consider allowing the young person to enter or leave the classroom a few minutes before their peers. This will help reduce the young person's exposure to unnecessary touch when accessing busy areas such as corridors, stairways etc.
- Provide a quiet workspace to use when needed.
- Seat the young person away from doors, windows, or buzzing lights
- Consider allowing the young person to use handheld fidgets if this enables them to focus
- Allow the student to have regular movement breaks



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