

Shake, Rattle and Roll

Sensory Strategies for Playgroups

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Introduction

- The 'just right' feeling
- Over-the-counter principles
- Become a sensitive observer
- Act preventatively
- Provide a Safe Environment –

S=sensory-motor

A=appropriate

F=fun

E=easy

Sensory Processing

- Begins in the womb and continues throughout childhood
- Neurological process of screening, organizing and responding to input
- Sensory integration is occurring all the time
- We use our senses to learn and develop
- What are our senses?

What are our Senses?

Visual System – eyes, discriminates differences

‘what does it look like’

Olfactory System - nose: Detects and smells,

‘where they are and what they smell like’

Auditory System – ears: hearing and understanding sounds

‘what it sounds like and where it is’

Gustatory System – mouth and taste

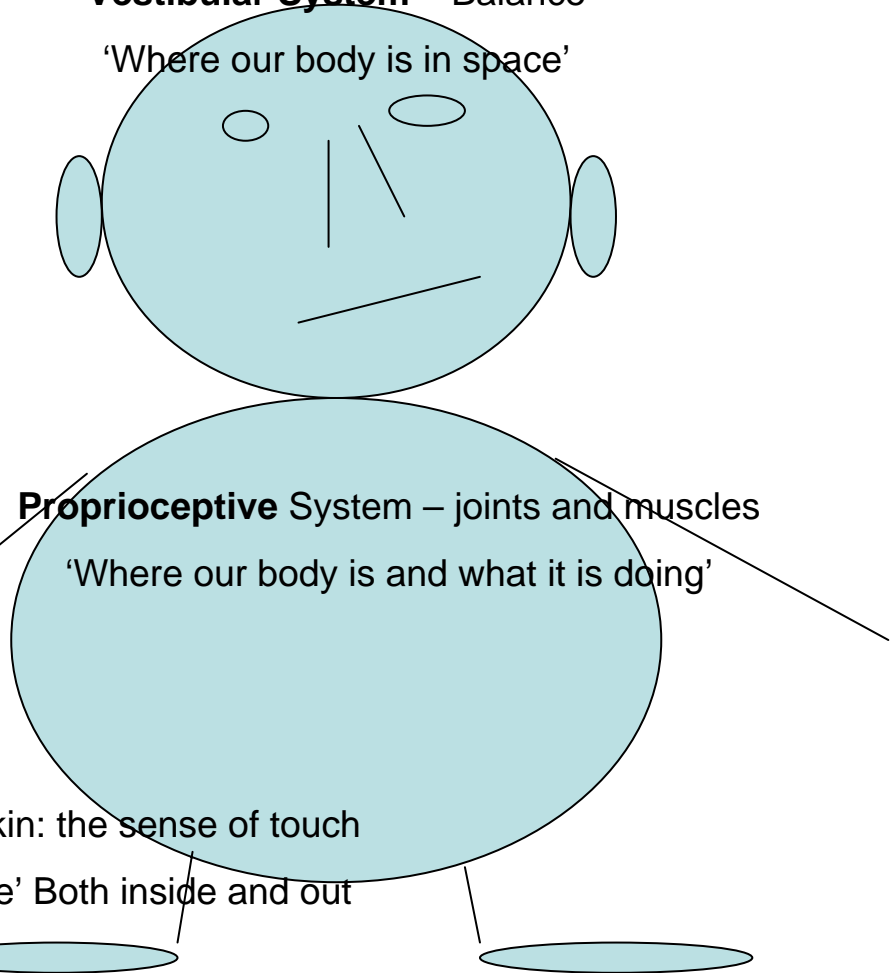
‘what it tastes like’

Tactile System – Skin: the sense of touch

‘what does it feel like’ Both inside and out

Vestibular System – Balance

‘Where our body is in space’



Proprioceptive System – joints and muscles

‘Where our body is and what it is doing’

Function for Each Sense

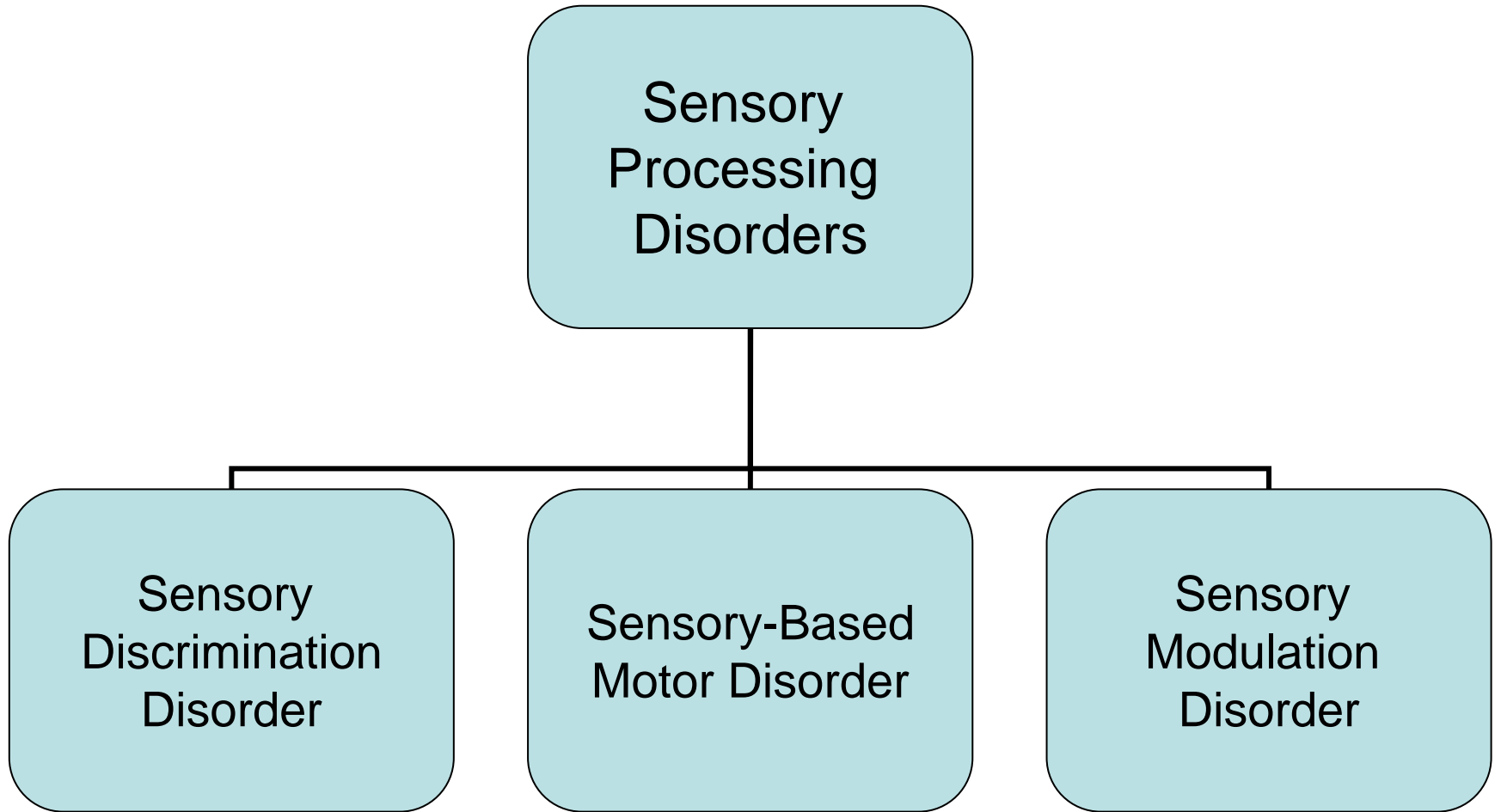
- **Far Senses:** tell us about what is happening around us
- (Visual, Olfactory, Auditory, Taste, Touch)

- **Near Senses:** tell us about our body – what it is doing, where it is.
- (Vestibular, Proprioception, Tactile)

Sensory Processing Challenges

- Most of the behaviours described occur in typically developing children.
- My aim is to help you identify areas of concern and to know when further assessment is warranted.
- You will learn to look for patterns and intensity, frequency and duration.
- Co-exist with many diagnoses
- Unable to produce an adaptive or effective response

Sensory Processing Challenges



Do you know this child?

- Hard time finding things
- Appears not to hear you
- Breaks toys
- Relies on their vision a lot
- Is messy
- Gets lost easily
- Moves awkwardly
- Poor body awareness
- Trouble with fasteners



= Sensory Discrimination Disorder

Do you know this child?

- Fears movement
- Dislikes tummy time
- Loses balance easily
- Poor co-ordination
- Appears lazy
- Is clumsy
- Tires easily / poor endurance



= Postural Disorder

Do you know this child?

- Repetitive play
- Frustrates easily
- Is disorganised
- Difficulty following directions
- Delay in speech and / or motor skills



= Motor Dyspraxia

Do you know this child?

- Avoids touching certain things
- Covers ears
- Fears movement
- Poor tolerance to grooming
- Often irritable, cries a lot
- Can be aggressive
- Extreme separation anxiety



= Over-Sensitive Modulation Disorder

Do you know this child?

- Slow to respond
- Wanders aimlessly
- Flat affect
- Hard to engage
- Seems unmotivated
- ‘in a world of his own’
- Seems sleepy
- Doesn't seem to notice things



=Under-Sensitive Modulation Disorder

Do you know this child?

- Always 'on the go'
- Touches everything
- Takes excessive risks
- May be demanding
- Seeks out noise/movement
- Hard to calm
- Cannot sit still



= Sensory Seeker

Why work with your child's sensory preferences?

- To increase their interest in wanting to communicate;
- To help motivate;
- To increase their attention and learning opportunities;
- To help them 'feel good'



Challenging Behaviours

Ordinary life activities are challenging for the child with SPD because they are unable to organize and process sensory information efficiently.

- It is hard to get my child to look at me or pay attention to me.
- My child moves constantly and won't stop to play with me.
- My child plays the same every day.

Engaging

“It is hard to get my child to look at me or pay attention to me.”

- Determine the sensory aspects of play he likes or dislikes (likes hugs)
- Make engaging easy by getting down to his level.
- Allow him to be the leader
- Look for signs that he is enjoying what you are doing.
- Respect his sensory preferences (touch pressure, hugs frequently, speak in a soft voice).
- Try to get him to be a more active participant
- Incorporate what he finds pleasurable into his play activities eg incy wincy spider with deep firm touch up his arms.
- Stop and allow him to indicate he wants more
- Keep it predictable.
- Allow him to anticipate what is about to happen
- Initially keep talking to a minimum – increasing gradually.



Moves Constantly

"My child moves constantly and won't stop to play with me."

- It is helpful to give your child even more opportunity for movement input but with input from you.
- Allow your child to choose which movement action, swing or jumping on trampoline and at the intensity pace he likes best.
- Involve yourself in the play as much as he allows eg holding firm on hips, jumping with him.
- Help him to learn start/stop by counting a consistent number of times. Accentuate the sequence "ready, set , go" or "1 – 2 – 3 – Stop". Songs help.
- As he enjoys your involvement encourage him to do more to get you involved eg wait for signs on certain movements.
- Require your child to do more for the game to continue.
- Make it more difficult gradually.
- Allow time for his response before making harder.



Repetitive Play and Solitary Play

"My child plays the same every day."

- Try to play with him at his game.
- Copy what he does and do it with him.
- Take control of the other pieces so he has to deal with you even briefly.
- Wait for him to request more. Encourage eye contact.
- Try to stretch the activity by bringing in other components.
- "accidentally" muck up his game, be playful about this and act surprised when you 'sabotage' his play.
- Avoid frustration by making it fun and playful, being dramatic.
- Block his path in a playful way. This makes him stop, at least for a moment.
- Encourage him to communicate his needs by 'acting dumb'.



Sensory Modulation Disorder

Over-responsive

Touchy Child

(screams, hits, bites, sensory overload)

1. Movement: Use slow rhythmical swinging or rocking
2. Muscle: Daily activities that involve jumping, pushing, pulling
3. Touch: Massage, deep pressure touch,
4. Ears: Talk quietly, reduce the amount of verbal instruction, hum or sing repetitive or familiar songs, play calming music
5. Eyes: Reduce visual clutter, provide a safe place for your child to hide
6. Mouth: Provide mouth fidgets, chewy foods, sucking or blowing activities

Sensory Modulation Disorder

Under-responsive

Sluggish Child

(Low energy, tires easily, seems weak)

1. Movement: Wake Up: movements done quickly, intensely and in an unpredictable manner. Give variety and vary intensity. Involve them in action. Play on moveable surfaces. Lots of movement breaks between concentration activity.
2. Muscle: push/pulling activities. Weight vest or tools. Mini trampoline between tasks. To help gain and maintain attention
3. Touch: Hand fidgets, provide firm touch downwards, quick changes, push or pull playdough.
4. Ears: Music that is upbeat, varied.
5. Eyes: Brighten lights/colours etc.
6. Mouth: Crunchy snacks or chewy mouth fidgets.

Sensory Modulation Disorder

Sensory Seekers

Busy Bees:

(Poor attending, on the go, takes ricks.)

1. Movement: set up obstacle courses, Encourage him to run faster, longer, up inclines, carrying heavy things.
Allow jumping into safe areas or beanbags. Lots of linear swinging (back/forth/ side to side/ up and down).
Allow small movements while sitting. Use movement to teach basic concepts.
2. Muscle: Wear weighted garments. Wheelbarrow walking. Throwing heavy bean bags. Lots of push/pull/carrying. Engage muscles whenever possible.
3. Touch: Hand Fidgets, Wear long underwear/lycra under clothing. Play sandwich game. Bear hugs, massages.
4. Ears: Minimise extra noise. Provide a quiet place in busy environment.

Resources

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