Tools for Getting Kids In Sync: Creating Sensory Rich Environments

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Children’s brains develop from the bottom up.

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What to Expect...

- Learn About Sensory Processing
- Realize Importance of Meeting Sensory Needs
- Discover Brain Based Strategies
“There is no greater feeling than being understood”
Stanley Greenspan
Sensory Processing is organizing sensation for use
THE SEVEN SENSORY SYSTEMS

PROPRIOCEPTION  VESTIBULAR  TACTILE  AUDITORY  VISUAL  GUSTATORY  OLFACTORY
Pyramid of Learning (Williams and Shellenberger 1996).
Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) occurs when sensory signals are either not detected by the brain or do not get organized into appropriate responses.
Sensory Processing Disorder

- Decreased ability to engage in occupations across environments
- Difficulty with sensory modulation
- Difficulty with sensory discrimination
- Difficulty with executive functioning skills
- Very poor self-regulation
Pyramid of Learning (Williams and Shellenberger 1996).
Tactile

01 Receptors in the skin for light touch, pain, temperature and pressure

02 Gives me body boundaries

03 Powerful effect on emotions

04 Alerts us to threat

05 Basis for body image
Tactile

- Deep pressure vs light
- Knowledge of individual profile
- Can be a powerful dysregulation
Proprioception

01. Receptors located in muscles and joints

02. Allows us to grade appropriate force or pressure in activities

03. Function is to give information to the brain about where body parts are and what they are doing without thinking about it

04. Activated by active movement (best with resistance)

05. Gives us an awareness of our body position
Proprioceptive “Heavy Work”

- Jumping, crashing, hanging, and crawling
- Last 90 minutes in a typical nervous system
- Heavy vest/lap cushion (20 minutes/specific activity)
- Play
  - Roughhousing
  - Playful resistance
- Functional activities
  - jobs/chores
  - animal walks on the move
  - theraband on the chairs
Vestibular

01. Receptors located in the inner ear

02. Responds to movement of the head

03. "You are here marker"

04. Allows us to know top/bottom, front/back and left/right

05. Reference point for all other sensation
- Rhythmic/predictable
- Linear vs. rotational
- Inversion is regulating (or not)
- Movement breaks in between and prior to learning
- Dynamic seating
- Jobs
- End with quick proprioceptive input
- Recess
Oral Motor Input

- Oral motor input helps us to concentrate
- Facilitating slower, deeper respiration through blowing activities can be calming (blow pens, bubbles, cotton ball races)
- Use water bottles with straws
- Food
Auditory

- Music with a defined rhythm and beat can facilitate movement and help with transitions
- Be aware of auditory environment
- Noise cancelling headphones
- Auditory interventions
Visual Input

- Palming to reset visual system
- Turn off fluorescent lights when possible
- Soothing visual tools in calm down space
- Reduce visual clutter
AROUSAL CHART

Sensory Overload
Optimal Level of Arousal
Low Arousal

Sensory Events Over Time

A Overload or sensory shutdown
B Sensory defensive
C Sensory non-defensive
D Under responsive or poor registration
Top Down
And
Bottom Up
Make it Visual

First
- Book

Then
- Play dough

- Brush
- Breakfast
- Be spectacled
- Be dressed
- Before screens
Prior Expectations

Dinner!

1. Share about your day
2. Try all foods
3. Sit in chair

Points!

Recess

1. Safe body
2. Friendly words
3. Have Fun!

Points:
THE ZONES OF REGULATION

BLUE ZONE
- Blue Zone Tools
  - Stretch

GREEN ZONE
- Green Zone Tools
  - Drink water

YELLOW ZONE
- Yellow Zone Tools
  - Deep breaths

RED ZONE
- Red Zone Tools
  - Take a break

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The number 1 way we all regulate is through connection

- Empathy FIRST! regulate relate reason
- Assume positive intention-detectoric work
- Share our calm!
PACE

Playful

Acceptance

Curious

Empathetic
Sometimes you need to look at things from a different perspective.
Children with difficult behaviors do NOT come with a manual they come with an adult who never gives up!
Resources

- Out of Sync Child Has Fun - Carol Stock Kranowitz
- Raising a Sensory Smart Child - Lindsey Biel and Nancy Peske
- Sensory Sensitive Child - Karen Smith and Karen Gouza
- Raising Human Beings - Ross Green
- Social Thinking - Michelle Garcia Miller
- The Whole Brain Child - Daniel Siegel
- Reflective Parent Child - Cooper and Redfern
- SPDstar.org
- S’cool Moves
- Go Noodle
- Facebook Groups
- Pinterest: Lara Levine
- laralevine.com