

Sensory Vs Behaviour and Sensory Strategies

This pack has been designed by the Occupational Therapist from the London Children's Practice who works at Turney/Lansdowne School and includes some activities and games that can be used to support understanding of Sensory Behaviours Vs Avoiding Tasks/Social Communication Behaviours. This pack will also include helpful tips to support Sensory Behaviours.

Occupational Therapy is a holistic profession that helps people across the lifespan participate in the things they want and need to do through the therapeutic use of everyday activities, also known as "occupations". We use these occupations as both the intervention and outcome of therapy. Hence the name "occupational therapy".



Understanding Sensory VS Behaviour – What is the Difference?

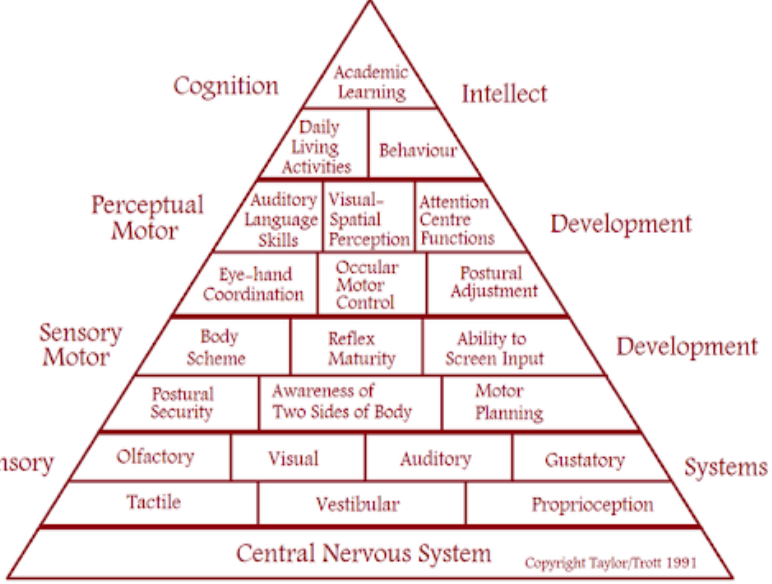



Sensory Behaviours are displayed as a result of impaired sensory processing system (i.e. the system that turns messages from the nervous system into responses – e.g. picking up a hot plate, your skin sends messages to the brain through the nervous system that then sends the message to put the plate down). When our body struggles with coordinating these responses may result in us being over-responsive (sensitive) or under-responsive (seeker – needs more input than others) to sensory input.




Sometimes sensory behaviours can be taken as a child “misbehaving” when they are trying to meet a sensory need. Understanding more about what sensory behaviours look like will help us to differentiate between what is a sensory seeking or avoiding behaviour and what is a communication/attention seeking/ task avoiding behaviour.

Sensory (Touch (Tactile), Taste, Smell, Vision, Body Awareness (Proprioception), Movement (Vestibular) and Interocpetion)	Behaviour (avoiding task, obtaining attention/communication)
Fidgety (constantly finding something to manipulate in their hands)	Task Avoidance (refusing to participate in the task or displaying negative behaviours or distracting behaviours to take your attention away from the task also) This may be due to task being too difficult, the child lacks confidence or it is not stimulating.
Mouthing (chewing on clothes, toys, fingers)	Obtaining Social/ Communication (a child with sensory seeking tendencies may struggle with effective social and communication skills and may struggle to gain positive attention through what we would consider as the typical way to do so. Lacking the positive attention they need, the child may seek negative attention. Impulsivity as a result of sensory behaviours, leads to children struggling to

	access positive attention and getting needs met through traditional methods.
Sudden Increase in Activity Levels (running, crashing, jumping, spinning)	Obtain Attention (Positive attention (smile, hug, praise), Negative Attention, shock/surprise reaction)
Reduced Activity Levels (Lazy, slow to respond when calling their name or giving an instruction)	Obtain and Object or Activity (Personal need such as food, drink, toilet, preferred object or activity)
Clumsy/ Awkward (bumping into people or objects, difficulty imitating movements or learning new physical activities)	
Disorganised (schoolwork is messy, clothes messy/buttons out of sync, messy eater, desk always messy)	

What are The Sensory Systems and How do They Work?

<p>Sensory Processing</p>	<p>Sensory processing is the complex interaction of all sensory system's taking in information, processing it and making sense of it, so that they can respond to it appropriately.</p> <p>This pyramid nicely illustrates how our ability to process sensory information is connected to the development of the systems above, all the way to academic learning and achievement.</p>  <p style="text-align: right;"><small>Copyright Taylor/Trott 1991</small></p>
<p>Tactile System</p> 	<p>Our tactile system interprets information about touch from receptors on the skin and in our mouths. Children who have difficulty processing tactile information tend to find it very difficult to engage in tasks and toys, as they are not receiving the correct amount of information (either too little or too much) about what their body is experiencing</p>
<p>Auditory System</p> 	<p>The auditory system processes and filters all noises from the surrounding environment. It is required to filter out sound and understand which sounds to pay attention to and which sounds to block out. For example, in a classroom environment a child is required to focus on the teacher's voice and block out noises from outside such as cars driving past or voices.</p>
<p>Oral System</p> 	<p>The sensory receptors in our mouth allow us to perceive temperature, texture (e.g. smooth like yogurt, hard like a potato chip, or a mixture of textures like cereal with milk), and taste (e.g. sweet, salty, bitter, sour).</p>

Visual System 	Our visual system processes and filters visual input and detail. It detects and interprets information from our environment.
Movement Processing 	Our receptors located in our joints and muscles help us understand where our body is in space so we can complete coordinated movements.
Body Positioning 	This system is in our inner ear and helps us to maintain balance, posture and help us to know to catch yourself when we are falling.
Interoception/ Gustatory	Our internal organs all have receptors that feedback to our brain to help us know when we are hungry, hot, in pain, when our bladder is full and many other daily functions.
Low registration	The term “low registration” is used to refer to a pattern of sensory processing where the individual has a high threshold to sensory experiences and does not notice or detect changes in sensory situations at the same rate of others.
Sensitive	Sensory sensitivity represents a low threshold and can respond to a small amount of input compared to others.

How Can We Help?

Strategy	How to Implement
Sensory Diets	<p>Schedule Sensory activities into the child's daily routine to support regulation. It is important to choose activities that will meet the needs of the child – i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• alerting activities when the child is struggling to attend, appearing low in energy, slow to react or respond• calming activities when the child seems to have extra energy, is struggling to listen due to fidgeting or needing to move around the room.
Teach Self-Regulation	<p>Teach your child to self-regulate by helping them to recognize their behaviours and what strategies they can use by using visuals, modelling strategies that you use when you're feeling escalated or under-responsive/tired.</p> <p>Programs such as the Zones of Regulation can also be used to support teaching and understanding of regulation.</p>

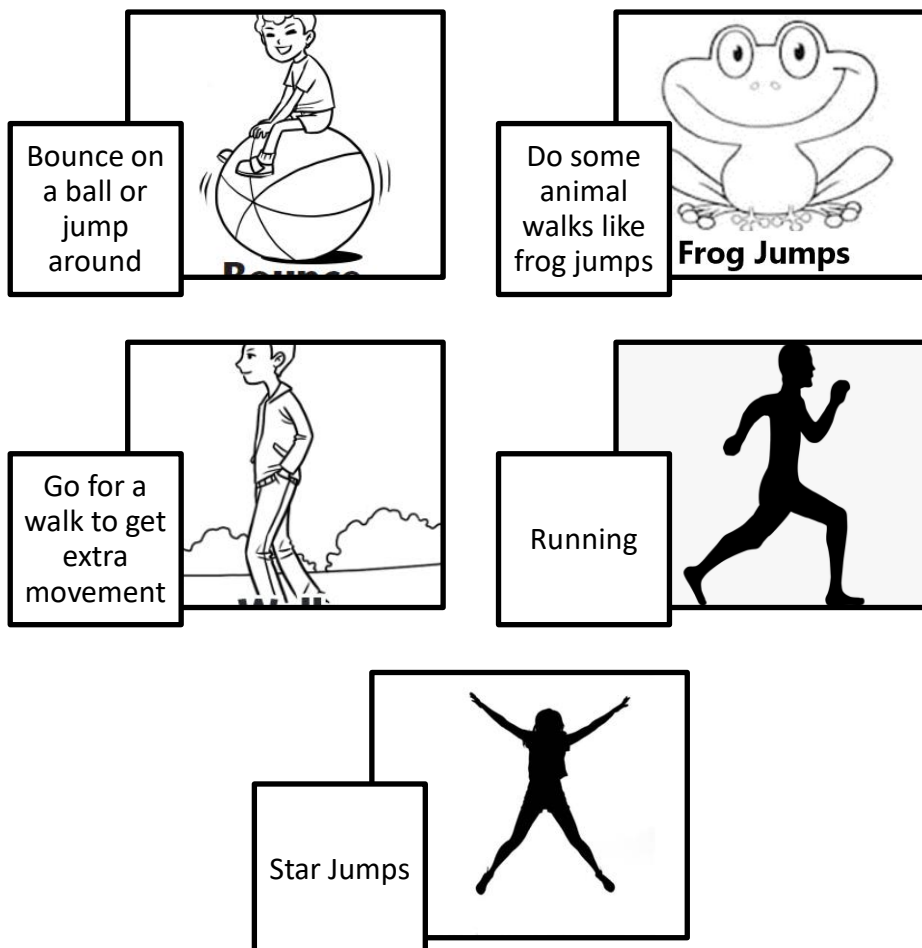
Alerting, Organising and Calming Activities

Depending on the needs of your child, you may require different types of exercises to support sensory regulation. The exercises can therefore be broken down into Alerting, Organising and Calming.

Alerting activities

Alerting activities can be used when children don't have much energy, are struggling to sit up (lying on chairs and tables), look bored, tired and sad and are in a low state of alertness. To prevent children from becoming too overstimulated, alerting activities should be followed by an organising and calming activity.

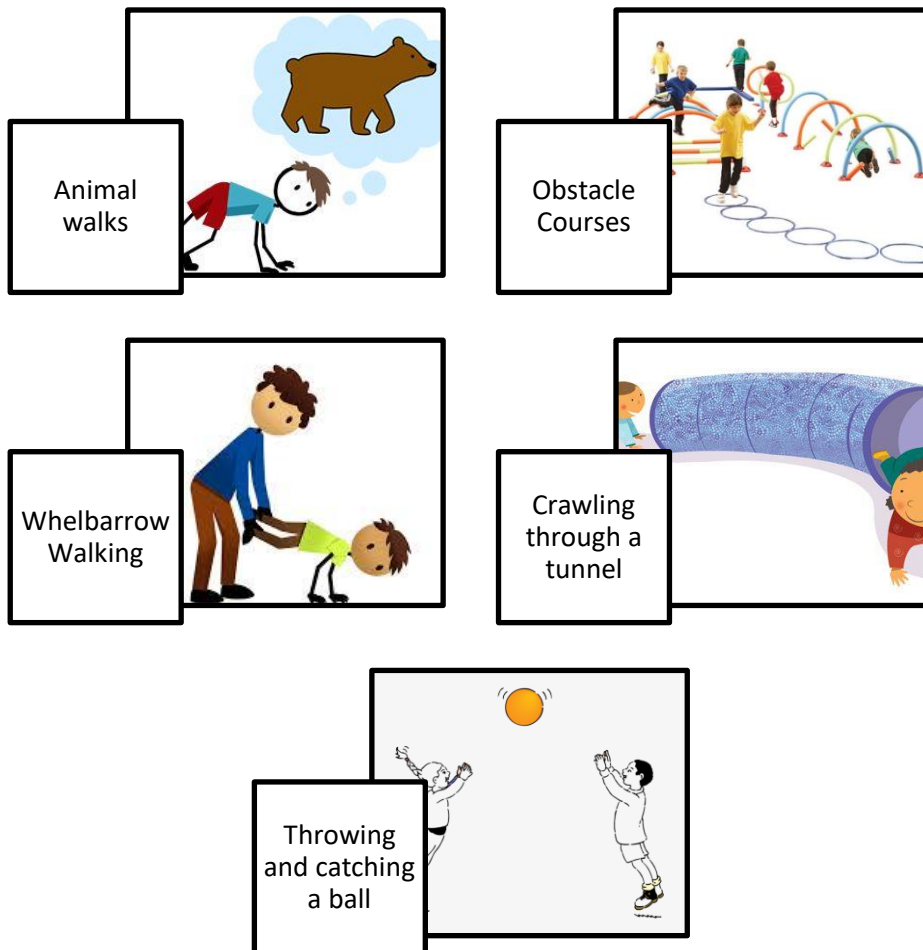
Activities you can do at home can include:



Organising Activities

Organising activities are nice activities to follow alerting activities. They help to organise the body and the mind to promote regulation.

Activities you can do at home can include:



Calming Activities

Calming activities can be used when children have too much energy, are struggling to sit still, are experiencing large emotions (such as anger and frustration) and are in a heightened state of alertness.

Activities you can do at home can include:

