

Child's Play
Pediatric Occupational Therapy Services

46 Post Road East • Westport, Connecticut • 06880 • T (203) 226-9961

Sensory Processing in Children Facts & Frequently Asked Questions:

- ❑ “Sensory Processing refers to our ability to take in information through our senses (touch-movement-smell-taste-vision-hearing), organize and interpret that information and make a meaningful response.”
- ❑ Concept of Sensory Integration was developed by A. Jean Ayres, PHD, OTR (1954-1988)
- ❑ Most children sensory development occurs naturally in the context of childhood activities
- ❑ When there is a disruption in Sensory Processing it is now accurately referred to as Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD). In the past it has been commonly referred to as Sensory Integrative Dysfunction or Disorder (SID), Dysfunction of Sensory Integration (DSI)
- ❑ It is estimated that nearly 5% of all children suffer from SPD
- ❑ FACT: Children with SPD are just as intelligent as their peers, many are gifted
- ❑ SPD can exist independently or concurrently with other developmental disorders
- ❑ SPD is estimated to occur within up to 70% of children considered learning disabled
- ❑ SPD can present problems at any age although symptoms are often persistently present
- ❑ Untreated SPD can result in secondary learning, social, emotional and motor difficulties
- ❑ A child suspected of having SPD should be evaluated by an Occupational Therapist
- ❑ Three Main Diagnostic Groups of Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) are being established:
 - 1) Sensory Modulation Disorder (SMD) Subtypes: SOR/SUR/SS
 - 2) Sensory Discrimination Disorder (SDD)
 - 3) Sensory Based Motor Disorder (SBMD) Subtypes: Postural Disorder/Dyspraxia
- ❑ Three Basic Systems of Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD);
 - 1) Tactile System:
Tactile input is the sense of touch including texture, temperature, pressure etc.
 - 2) Vestibular System:
Vestibular input is the sense of head position and movement governed by the inner ear
 - 3) Proprioceptive System:
Proprioceptive input is the sensations from joints, muscles & connective tissues
- ❑ “Sensory Seeking” is a term used to describe a child who is under-responsive to sensation
- ❑ “Sensory Avoiding” is a term used to describe a child who are over-responsive to sensation
- ❑ “Sensory Diet” is a term conceptualized by Patricia Wilbarger OTR. This is a custom designed schedule of sensory activities chosen by an experienced therapist, offering the accurately matched sensory inputs a child needs to function. Sensory Diets help children stay organized and alert for interaction and learning.
- ❑ “Sensory Quiet Spaces” provide a space for children to re-organize when over-stimulated
- ❑ How can you help the child with SPD? Educate-Empower-Support-Advocate
- ❑ Always remember they are Children *with* Sensory Processing Disorder