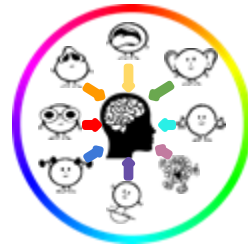


All About Senses



Our Senses

We all have 8 senses. We use these senses every day to do all of the things we want and need to do. Like reading a book, running around or eating lunch.

Our 8 senses:

Sight



Smell



Taste



Sound



Touch



Proprioception



This tells our brain where our body parts are, and what they are doing.

Vestibular



This tells our brain how we are moving.

Interoception



This tells our brain what is happening inside our body.

Image source: Culp, S. (2011). A Buffet of Sensory Interventions.

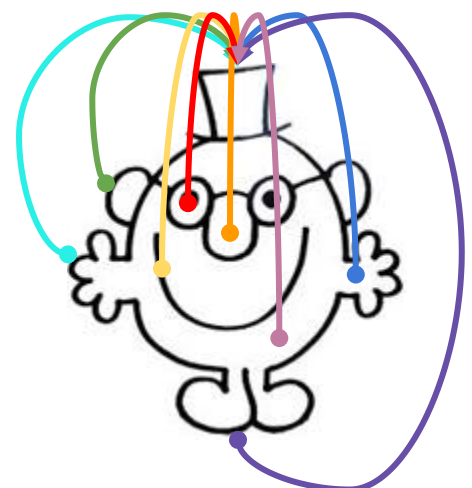
What is sensory processing ?

Sensory processing is:

- First...how our brain gets messages from our senses.
- Then...how it reacts to these messages.

We call these messages sensory information.

If we touch a hot thing, our touch sense will tell our brain. Then our brain will tell our hand to move away from the hot thing. This is an example of sensory processing.



Sensory processing differences

Sensory Information

The information our senses take in, and then pass on to our brain.

Sensory processing differences happen when our brain understands the messages from our senses in a unique way, that is different from other people.

We might have differences understanding **sensory information** from all of our senses, or just one, it is unique for every person.

There are 3 ways we might understand sensory information differently:

- 1. Sensory modulation** - This is the difference in the ability to filter incoming sensory stimuli and therefore respond appropriately to it.
- 1. Sensory discrimination** - This is a difference in the ability to distinguish between different sensory inputs/ information.
- 1. Sensory based movement** - this means we can find it hard to balance or coordinate our movements.

What might it look like

We might:

- Avoid sensory information because it feels overwhelming
- Look for more sensory information
- Be slow to notice sensory information
- Be clumsy
- Not know what is happening around them

Sensory processing differences are different for every person, so we might not look like this, and that is ok.

Why is it important

The sensory information sent to our brain helps us do the right thing at the right time.

For example:

- Our sense of sight might tell our brain when it is safe to cross a road.
- Our brain might help us ignore sounds that are distracting us from work.

If we have sensory processing differences then it can be hard for us to do the things we want and need to do.

What can we do

Individual Intervention

Giving exercises to develop coordination and motor skills through practice and strengthening

Change the layout of the classroom (i.e., reduce visual clutter)

Enhance the Environment

Train staff in how to act as an effective co-regulating partner for pupil-specific needs

Adapt the occupation

Is there anyway we should appropriately adjust the task?

Can we introduce more interactive and sensory diverse ways of learning like tracing pre-writing shapes in shaving foam/ on a light box or a sensory medium that captures your child's attention!

What next?

If you are finding it difficult to complete tasks/ activities that are important or meaningful to you an occupational therapist can work with you to...

- Discover your unique sensory profile
- Uncover your strengths and challenges
- Share what strategies will best support you with your sensory processing needs and so enable you to participate in the activities that you identified as meaningful

If you have any questions please contact Laura Reddy on laura.reddy@sladewood.sandmat.uk