



What is Sensory Processing & Sensory Integration?

At Pikes Peak Respite Services it has been recognized that many are diagnosed with sensory processing disorder. This training has been created to help PPRS staff recognize and implement strategies to help with sensory processing.

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) is a neurological disorder that causes difficulties with processing information from the five senses: vision, auditory, olfaction and taste as well as from the sense of movement and or positional sense. For those with SPD, sensory information is received, but perceived abnormally in a way that causes distress, discomfort and confusion.

SPD can affect people in only one sense or in multiple senses. One person with SPD may over-respond to sensation and find clothing, physical contact, light, sound, food or other sensory input to be unbearable. Some individuals may show little or no reaction to stimulation, even pain.

Children with SPD often have problems with motor skills and other abilities needed for school success. As a result, they often become isolated and suffer from low self-esteem and other social/emotional issues.

SPD is treated by an intensive treatment plan by an occupational therapist. The activities listed below give examples of activities that can be implemented into a sensory rich diet.

Oscillation (bouncing, jumping, moving the body up and down) & Balancing

- a. Hopping: in place, forward, backwards, side to side
- b. Jumping: on a trampoline, off a curb, over a rope, jumping jacks
- c. Bouncing: on a bed, seated on a hoppity-hop or therapy ball
- d. Walking: on uneven surfaces, on a balance beam,
- e. Running: in place, across a field
- f. Dancing



2. Linear Activities: (moving in a line, back and forth)

- a. Rocking: on a rocking chair, rocking horse or “the rocking puppy” (rocking on hands and knees) or tummy down over a therapy ball
- b. Walking: on a flat surface or up and down stairs
- c. Swinging in a linear fashion: on swings, tires, net, or hammock
- d. Riding in a wagon or wheelbarrow
- e. Sliding down a slide: sitting up, lying down, forward & backward

3. Rotary Activities (moving in a circular or semi-circular motion)

- a. Rolling: down a grassy field, across a gym mat
- b. Sit-n-spin
- c. Using a swivel chair
- d. Pushing or riding a merry go round
- e. Twirling arms or twirling around

There are qualities that can make sensory in-put calming such as:

Steady compression, slow stretches, heavy or sustained resistance, slowly alternating push or pull

Qualities that make sensory in-put alarming:

Fast paced, quick changes, unexpected changes, jarring or jerking, abrupt stops or starts

Every person with SPD is affected differently, what may work for one person might dis-regulate another. Be sensitive to what may be trying to convey with their speech and/or behaviors.