

SENSORY INTEGRATION DISORDER & TREATMENT

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BASIC

Information GUIDE



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What is SENSORY INTEGRATION DISORDER & TREATMENT?



SENSORY INTEGRATION IS THE PROCESS OF ORGANIZING SENSORY INFORMATION FOR FUNCTIONAL USE

All day, every day we receive information about the world through our sensory systems. This includes our sight, hearing, smell, and taste. The less well known senses of touch (tactile), movement (vestibular), and body position (proprioception) are especially important for sensory integration.

The basic assumption is that sensory information received from the environment and our body is integrated in the many parts of the nervous system so that a person can interact with the environment functionally and experience appropriate satisfaction.

The functional behavior in children includes effective participation in play, chores, self-care, as well as school routines.

A child with intact sensory integration is more likely to have successful responses to a challenge in his/her environment. This child can run, jump, play, and attend to structured activities without much difficulty. This child is much more likely to respond adaptively, and each adaptive response creates a positive change in the brain due to "neural plasticity".

Mastery of each challenge gives the child a sense of competence and drives development forward.

Sensory integration is linked to a child's emotional states and organization of behavior.

Children with disorders in sensory integration have inefficient processing of information received through the senses thereby impacting their educational, social, and emotional development. Their difficulties are chronic and disrupt their everyday life in a significant manner.

The child with sensory processing disorder may lose self-confidence and give up trying to master new skills. Emotional difficulties such as aggressiveness, poor frustration tolerance, behavioral outbursts, and/or poor self-esteem may develop.

A child with a sensory modulation disorder has a problem turning the sensory messages into controlled behaviors that match the nature and intensity of the sensory information. In other words, the child over or under reacts to the sensation.

A child with a sensory based motor disorder has a problem with stabilizing their body, moving, or planning a series of movements so as to react functionally.

A child with a sensory discrimination disorder has a problem with sensing similarities and differences between sensations.

Many children with symptoms of sensory processing disorder also have another diagnosis such as Attention Deficit /Hyperactivity Disorder or Autism.

Occupational Therapists with special training in this area can provide individualized sensory integration treatment using playful, meaningful activities that enhance the child's sensory intake to promote adaptive responses for improved daily functioning within their life roles.

The goal of the treatment is to enable the child to participate in childhood activities in a typical manner. This includes playing with peers, enjoying and learning at school, dressing and grooming, playing sports and/or developing hobbies.

A child is an active participant in sensory integration treatment. You cannot make a child perform an adaptive response, but you can provide an environment and "tools" to encourage such.

Children have an inner drive. Sensory Integration therapy provides an environment that offers "just right challenges" that tap into this inner drive. Treatment tasks are designed to be "not too hard" (failure) or "not too easy" (boring).

The therapist should be offering treatment activities that entice the child, not coerce.

Sensory integration treatment often includes the use of special equipment including suspended swings, climbing structures, ball pits, and scooter boards.

Sensory integration treatment should include education for parents, teachers, and other caregivers. The intervention should include recommendations for shaping the child's daily routine to incorporate or eliminate sensory input at strategic times. This is often referred to as a sensory diet.

Sensory integration treatment should include cognitive (thinking) strategies to help the child manage his/her self. These strategies need to be individualized to accommodate the child's age, developmental level, and responsiveness to these interventions.