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NEWSLETTER

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SPOT A SENSORY SEEKER!

Every class may have a child, who seems a little clumsy, maybe a bit too loud or may have aggressive behaviors like pushing, rough handling, and sitting too close to others i.e. being unaware of personal space. This can be a child, who is seeking out sensory input more than other children or more than what is required by the rest.

Our body perceives five basic senses that are touch (tactile system), taste, sight, sound and smell. Along with these sense, two other important senses that are perceived include, the sense of movement and balance (vestibular system) and the sense of body awareness (proprioceptive system). Efficient registration, processing and integration of these senses build a foundation for efficient learning and interaction.

Therefore, a sensory seeker requires added sensory input in order to organize his/her nervous system and participate effectively. It helps the child regulate self and in turn engage with peers and adults in all settings.

What will you see a child seeking sensory input doing?

Tactile input:

- Touch and feel objects with certain textures
- Roll on the floor/mat
- Have an unusual tolerance for pain
- Stand/lean too close to people

Proprioceptive input:

- Engage in roughhouse play
- Bang the doors/drawers
- Stomp foot while walking
- Enjoy jumping/hopping/ bumping and crashing





So once you spot a sensory seeker instead of stopping him/her from engaging in such behaviors, find and explore ways of providing the needed input in a more appropriate and structured manner, but at the same time that, which is pleasing to the child.

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Sensory seekers may engage in some or all of these, and many other behaviors, to gain the sensory input their body and brain needs. This input helps the child become aware of his/her sense of self with respect to body and surrounding. Make’s him/her more active, alert and attentive. Thereby helps improve the child’s level of arousal and ability to learn.

Vestibular input:

- Rock selves back and forth
- Loves spinning
- Doesn’t feel dizzy even when others may
- Enjoys being upside down

However, the child’s way of obtaining the sensory input is not always socially acceptable; as some of these behaviors can be disruptive to self, as well as others around him/her. But it is also true, that his/her sensory needs are genuine. Hence, it is crucial that we help channelize the child’s behavior aptly, by providing adequate amounts of input so as to help him/her get through the day.



So once you spot a sensory seeker, instead of stopping him/her from engaging in such behaviors, find and explore ways of providing the needed input in more appropriate and structured manner, but at the same time pleasing to the child. Follow the child’s lead to aid in choosing the befitting activities to indulge in.

Visual input:

- Seek certain visual shapes/patterns/colors
- Enjoy watching spinning objects
- Loves visually stimulating games or TV

shows

Auditory input:

- Seek out or make loud noises
- Likes listening to certain loud sounds
- May hum continuously

You can also refer them to an occupational therapist, who will help carve out a path for the child to attain the same sensory input they seek, in a manner that is meaningful, acceptable and beneficial to the child. Aiding him/her to develop physically, learn academically and participate socially within his/her environment.





“Most parts of the day involve arguments, yelling and nagging. This can get frustrating!”

EASIER WAYS TO GET THE JOB DONE!

Most of us have to persistently keep reminding our child to “get ready”, “clean up the mess”, “put your shoes on the shoe rack” or “pack your bag pack” etc. to help them finish various tasks in their day. This list of instructions is endless.

It is often seen that we as parents or sometimes-even professionals keep giving the same instructions to our child again, and again, and again, until the expected job is done.

If and when the child fails to respond, notice how the intensity (in terms of decibel and pitch) of our voices tends to get louder, and louder, and louder. Most parts of the day involve arguments, yelling or nagging. This can get frustrating!

It is almost like a vicious cycle where in, both the child and the caretaker (parent or professional) get distressed.

Irrespective of the issues, certain jobs need to be done! Here are a few things we as parents and professionals can keep in mind to get them done easily.

- It is best if the instruction to finish the task, is given to the child when you are face to face at the child’s eye level, instead of shouting it from across the room.
- If you notice that the child is not responding to your verbal prompt then, stop and rethink about what you’ve said. Analyze where the problem lies. Whether, is your child even paying heed to what you said in the first place, or is your instruction too much information given altogether, making it difficult for him/her to comprehend? Is it that the task is of low interest to the child or is it too challenging for him/her.

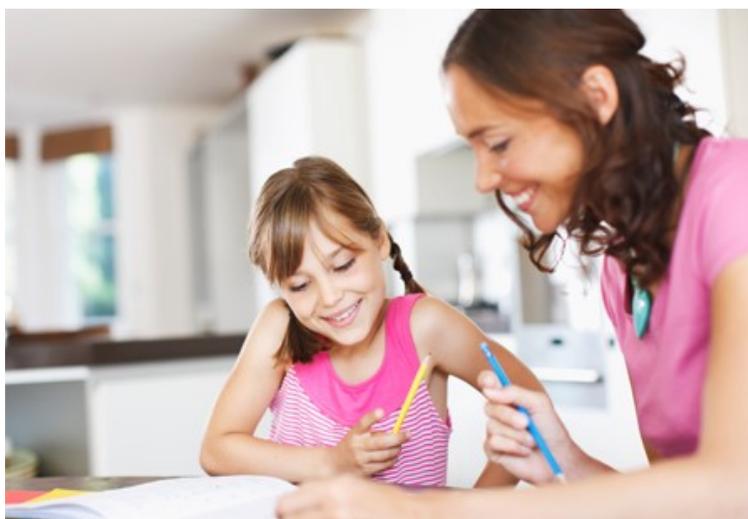


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- It will be helpful when you tell the child what is expected and then give him/her 10-15 seconds to process, understand and act upon the verbal command. Physically guiding them towards what needs to be done helps them get started on the task at hand. For e.g. directing the child towards the dining table at lunch time will help him/her register that it's time for them to eat their lunch.
- Repeating the same instruction over and over again makes it less of a command and more of a monotone. Basically, the point is to not repeat the same thing if it's not working. Try and frame it differently, use reinforcements and motivate the child with consequences or rewards alongside. For e.g. if you've said it's Lunch Time and it's not worked, you can probably try "time to eat" or "lunch is ready on the table" etc. or "first lets finish lunch and then play with blocks".

Hopefully use of these above strategies will aide you achieve greater compliance from the child and make the child as well as the caretaker feel much better.

“ Repeating the same instruction again and again makes it less of a command and more of a monotone. Try and frame it differently, use reinforcements and motivate the child with consequences and rewards.”



For any question or concerns regarding the newsletter please write to us on: reachtherapycenterforchildren@gmail.com

- Simoni Parikh
Occupational therapist
Reach Therapy Center for Children

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