Practical Approaches to Sensory Processing

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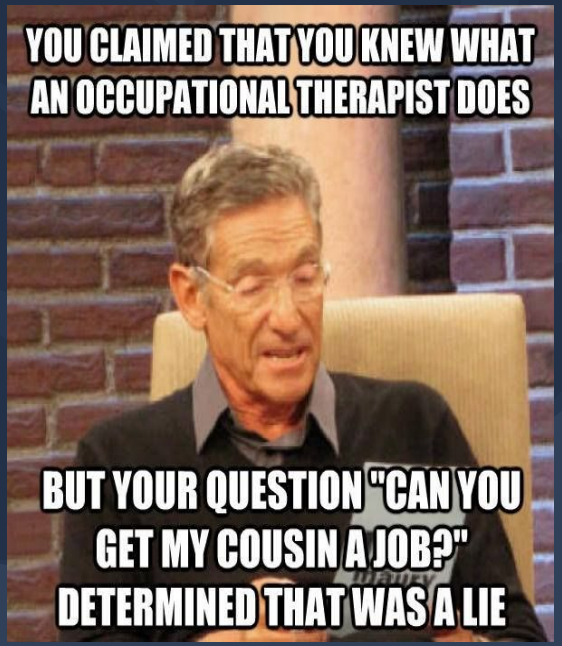
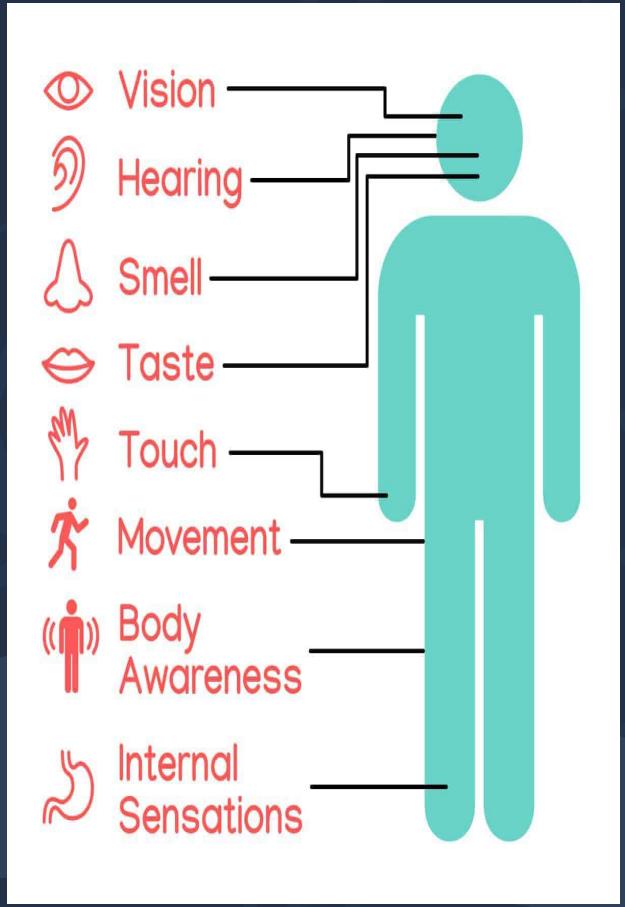
Objectives

1. Sort out all of the sensory terms
2. Understand how sensory processing skills impact daily function
3. Understand how sensory processing difficulties can impact function
4. Review a practical approach to addressing sensory processing difficulties





- Perceive and interpret our surroundings
- Detect, locate, and identify sounds in the environment
- Detect and recognize smells using chemical receptors in the nose
- Detect difference between sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and savory
- Perceive pressure, temperature, traction, and pain
- Balance, motion, and spatial orientation
- Intrinsic ability to locate itself and extremities in space.
- Recognize internal cues

What is Sensory Integration?

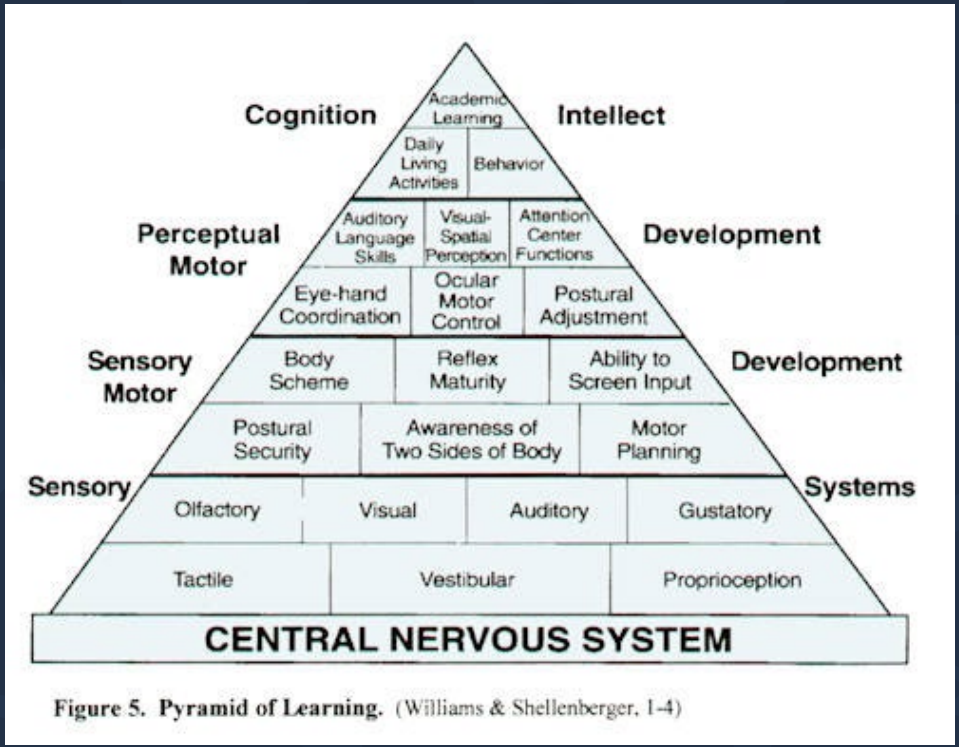
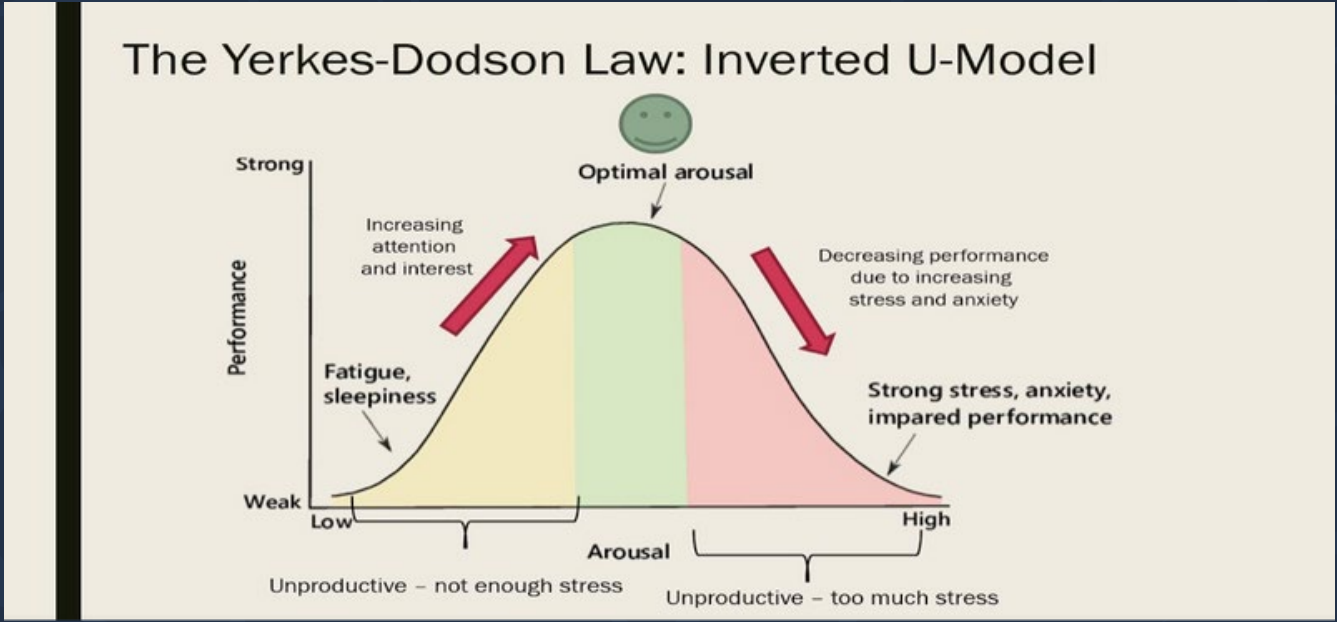
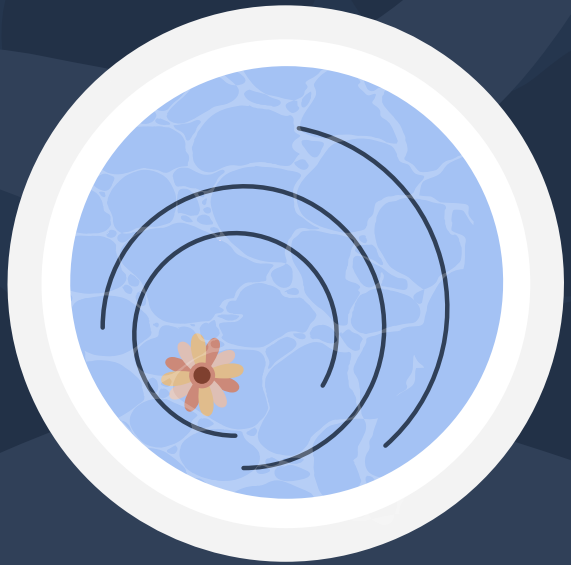


Figure 5. Pyramid of Learning. (Williams & Shellenberger, 1-4)

Modulation and Regulation

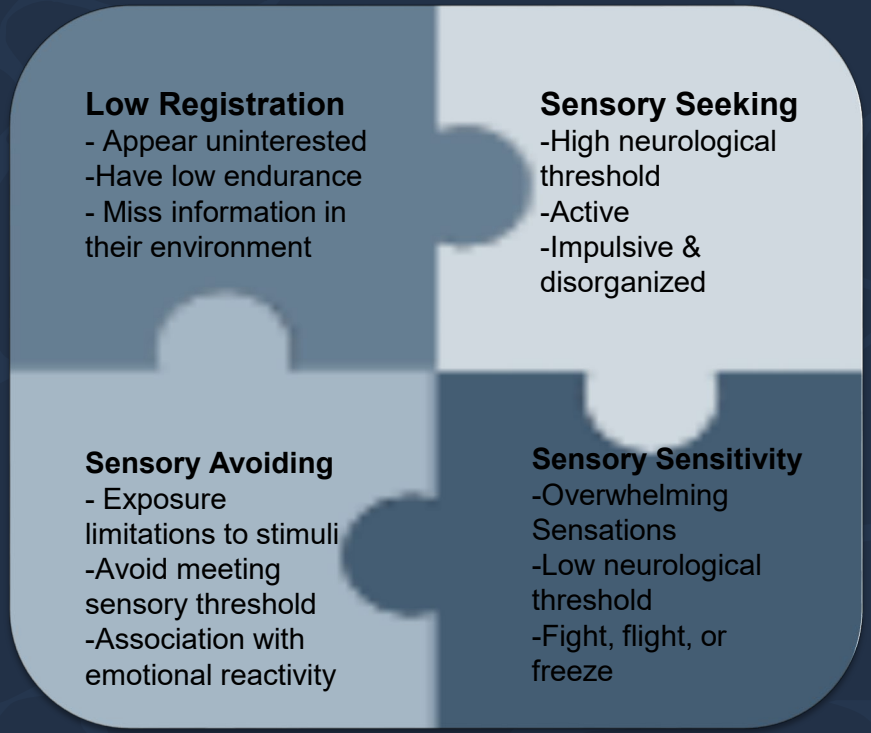




90% of children with an ASD have some difficulties with sensory processing

(Como et.al, 2020)

Sensory Processing Difficulty



Impact of Sensory Processing Difficulties

- Decreased initiation of social contact
- Picky eater & poor nutrition
- Poor focus
- Increased activity level
- Difficulty with daily tasks
- Poor transitions
- Passive personality
- Perceived as intense or make others uncomfortable
- Difficulty engaging in family outings
- Difficulty participating in “typical” leisure activities
- Self-Injurious behaviors
- Emotionally reactive
- Inconsistent pain responses
- Bowel and bladder dysfunction

ABC’S of Sensory Processing Difficulty

Antecedents

Florescent lights
A baby was crying
Crowded
Still in winter coat, then over heated
Navigate around the chairs

Behaviors

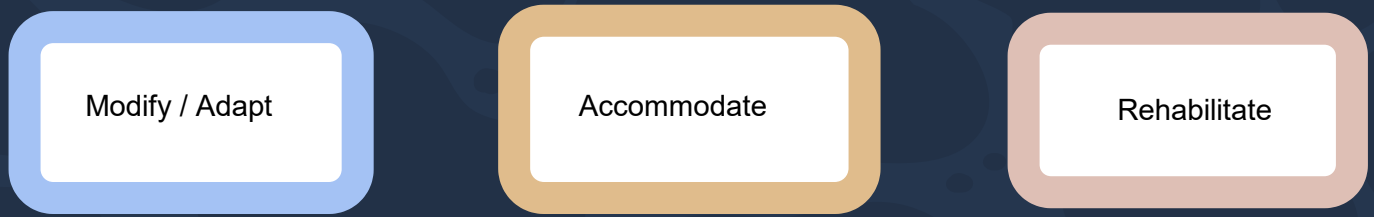
Crying/Tantrum
Increased Stimming behavior
SIB

Consequences

Sad they missed out
Possibly feeling guilty
New transition
Positive/Negative Reinforced

Now What?

1. Sensory Integration Theory : Engineering and adjusting the sensory qualities in the child's environment to promote self- direction and play while facilitating adaptive responses in motor, affective, social, language, and cognitive areas



What Can You Do?

Antecedents

- Modify environment
- Accommodate
- Challenge

Consequences

- Maintain participation
- Learning coping
- Feel Better
- Learning new skill
- Made a positive connection with an event

Behaviors

- Decrease stimuli
- Provide Deep Pressure
- Distract with special interest when possible

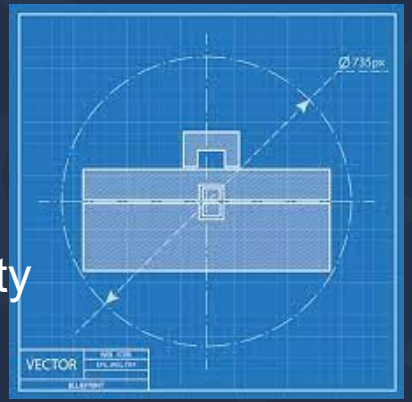
Create your toolbox

1) What functional difficulty do you want to address?

- “My child cries every morning putting their clothes on for school”

2) What is the sensory difficulty impacting function?

- Learned through experiences that some clothes can feel itchy, restricting, uncomfortable



3) What strategies can we use to support the sensory difficulty?

- Buy different clothing
- Heavy work before, during, after
- Practice with the sensation
- Provide positive reinforcement

4) Trial and error

- Try a variety of strategies and decide what works best for you and your child

Accommodate/Modify

Home/Community:

- Become involved in physical activities in the community
- Provide opportunities for vestibular input (Swing, Spin, Being in different positions
- Encourage tactile play
- Create spaces for decreased stimuli– Burrowing spaces
- Work movement and calming sensory input into daily tasks
- Use timers, stop watch, or play lists as auditory and visual cues
- Prepare for transitions
- “Sensory Diets”

School:

- Recess
- Mobile seating devices
- Visual and kinesthetic learning
- Chew and fidget toys
- Work in various positions
- Heavy work activities
- Callisthenic breaks
- Prepare students for transitions
- Noise cancelling opportunities
- Create opportunities to reduce sensory load

Thank you!

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