

Sensory Diets

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An abstract watercolor-style background with various shades of purple, blue, and white, creating a textured, artistic effect.

Objective

Explore a range of strategies and tools to address the sensory processing needs of students/children.

Agenda

1. What is sensory processing disorder?
2. Creating “Sensory Diets” (including examples)
3. Explore a range of sensory strategies
4. Resources for further information



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Sensory Processing

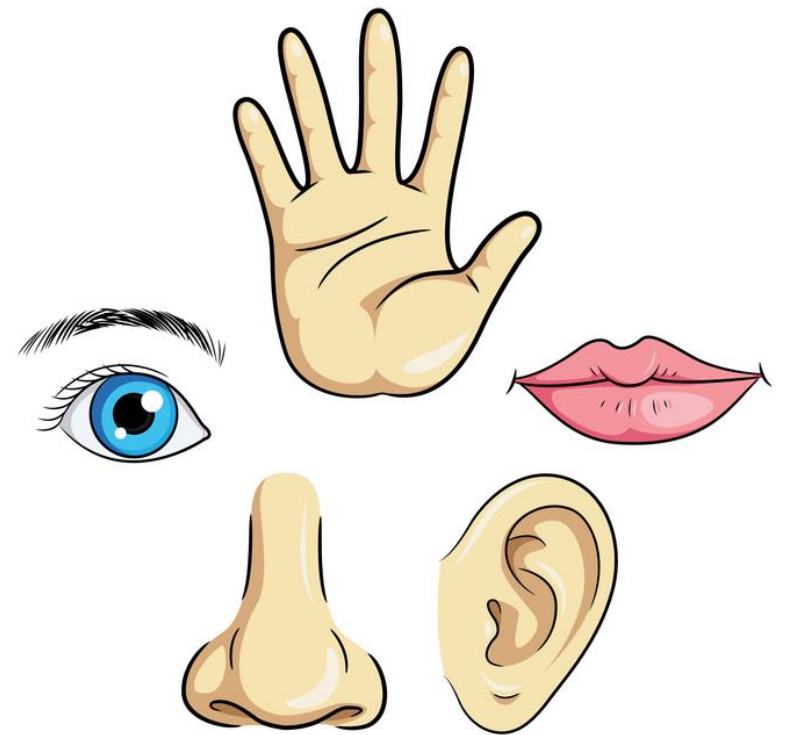


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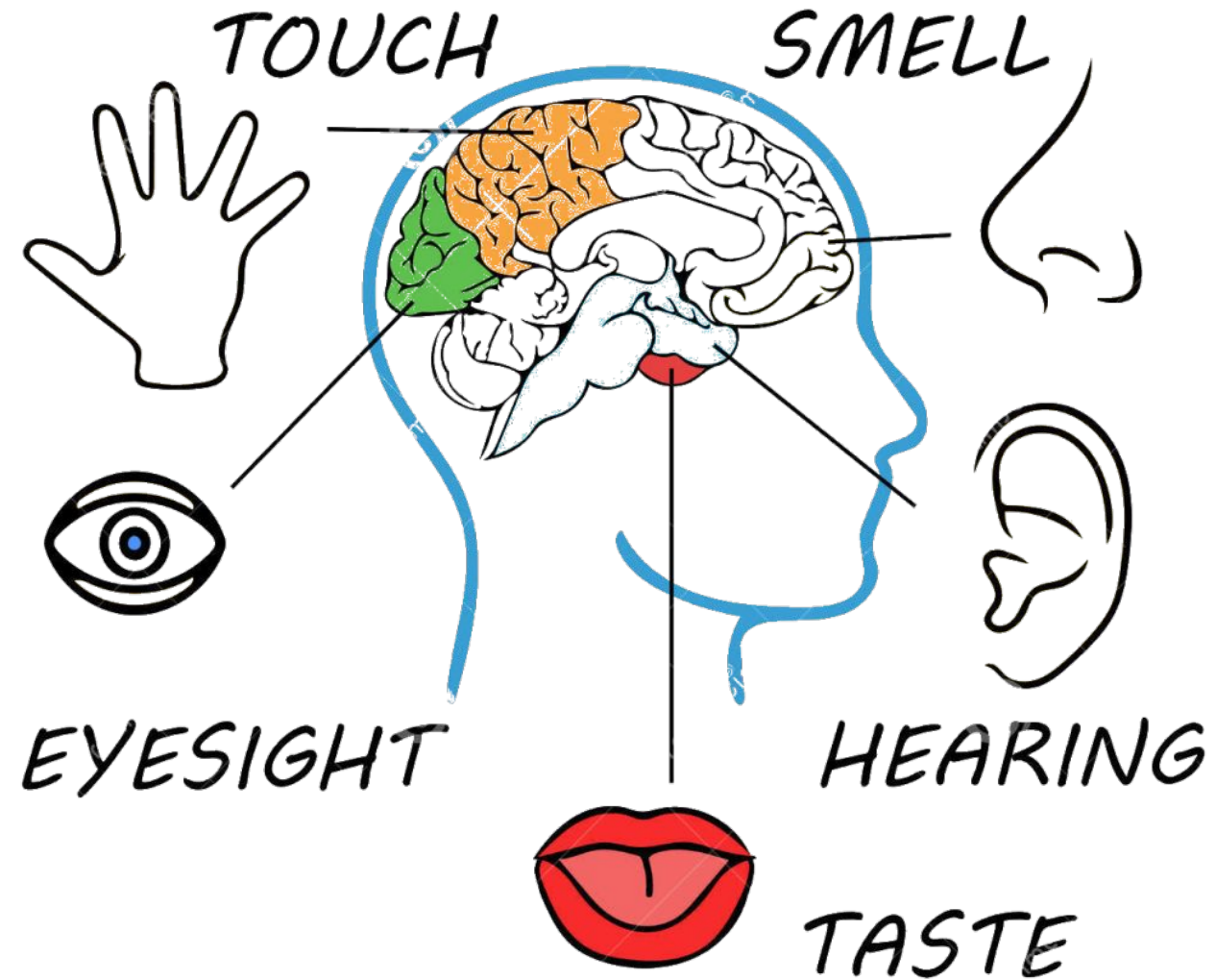
Sensory Information

- 5 Senses (sight, sound, touch, taste & smell) +
- Vestibular sense = Movement (balance) +
- Proprioceptive sense = Body joints

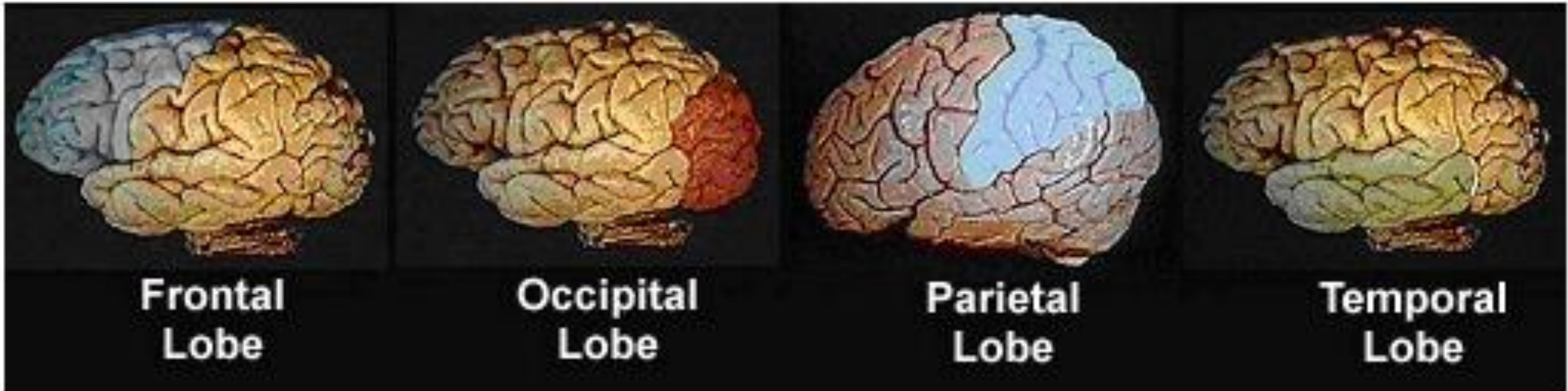


Sensory Processing

- Brain controls information from the environment
- When the senses work together we have “good sensory processing”
- We react to sensory input



Sensory Processing in the Brain



[STAR Institute - Sensory Systems](#)

Sensory Processing Disorder

SPD - Sensory Processing Disorder

- Brain has trouble organizing responses to senses
- Oversensitivity to sights, sounds, smells, etc.

How to Identify SPD

- Evaluation by O.T.
- Observations, parent interviews, standardized checklists
- All environments should be considered Ex: home, school

Sensory Diets



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What is a sensory diet?

- Carefully designed series of physical activities
- Provides the sensory inputs the child needs
- Can be part of [sensory integration therapy](#)
- Works best when combined with other interventions

What is a Sensory Diet?

- Made up of all the sensory input you take in
- Includes activities and strategies to help a person stay **focused** and **organized** thought the day

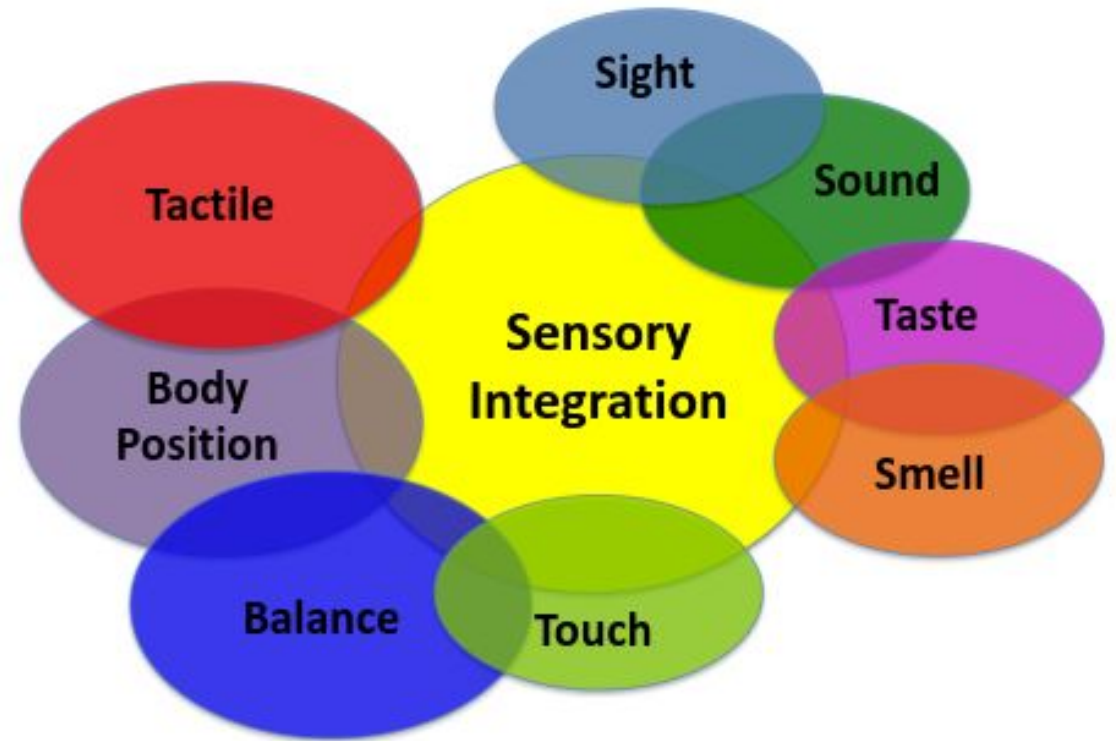
Dr. Patricia Wilbarger is credited with naming the “sensory diet”.

What is a sensory diet?

- Treatment that helps those with sensory processing issues
- Has nothing to do with food
- Is tailored to the student and/or accommodations
- May include structured exposure to sensory activities

Why use a sensory diet?

- Helps with paying attention
- Learn new skills
- Socialize with others
- Find the “just right” state



How Can a Sensory Diet Help?

- Exercise and input to muscles and joints has a lasting impact on attention for **several hours**
- Strategies are helpful for those **identified as having SPD** and **others with learning and attention issues**

[Understood.org - Sensory Diets: What You Need to Know](https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-issues/sensory-processing-disorder/sensory-diets-what-you-need-to-know)

Sensory Diet Principles

- It's a lifestyle - **preventative, not reactive**
- Exercises during motor breaks - 15-20 minutes **several times a day**
- Most helpful can be “head inverted” exercises that include as **many muscle groups** as possible
- Fidgets, weighted blankets, pressure clothes, noise cancelling headphones and oral sensory strategies may also be helpful

Sensory Processing Issues

- Some overreact to stimulation
- They become overwhelmed and hyperactive
- Some underreact and seek additional stimulation
- This may vary throughout the day



Examples of Sensory Diets - Low Arousal

- 20 jumping jacks
- Bounce on a therapy ball 20 times
- Hold a yoga pose for 10 seconds

Examples of Sensory Diets - High Arousal

- 5 repetitions of being rolled in the yoga mat
- 10 second dead bug yoga pose
- 10 seconds of wall pushes

(Repeat 3 times)

- Pick a fidget and return to work

Some Standard Activities

- Jumping jacks
- Snow angels
- Swinging
- [Rolled up in a Yoga Mat](#)
- Hopping up and down
- Push ups
- Bouncing on a ball
- [Rolling on a ball](#)
- [Yoga poses](#)
- [Pushing on a wall](#)
- [Work activities](#)
- [Animal walks](#)

More Activities

- Therapy balls are extremely versatile
- **Monitor for safety**
- Ex: Sit on the ball, bounce up and down while clapping 10 times.
- Kids can sit, bounce or lay on stomach on back

Yoga Move - Downward Dog Pose

- Uses all muscle groups
- Includes head inversion
- No equipment needed



Yoga Move - Plank

- Lie on stomach on ground & lift belly up
- Weight on toes
- Lie straight like a board or “plank”
- Provides deep pressure and calming sensory input



[GoGoYoga For Kids](#)

Yoga Move - Dead Bug Pose

- Lay on back, feet up in air
- Hold feet in hands
- Push on the child's feet while they push back
- Hold 10 seconds



Obstacle Course

- Put the exercises together
- Have the **child pick** 3-4 exercises, complete in a sequence
- Complete the rotation 3 times
- Estimate 10-15 minutes

Sensory Diet Tips

- Each child is **different** - they need various sensory diets
- Give the child **choices**
- **Do not** need expensive equipment
- Do need **consistency** and options so it **isn't boring**
- Older kids strategies should look **like exercise**

Sensory Diet Tips

- Don't make them **feel different** than peers
- Follow this routine with the more stressful or difficult classes
- Ex: Child gets stressed in Math. Follow the “motor break” with math
- Goal is to provide strategies **naturally scheduled** in the day

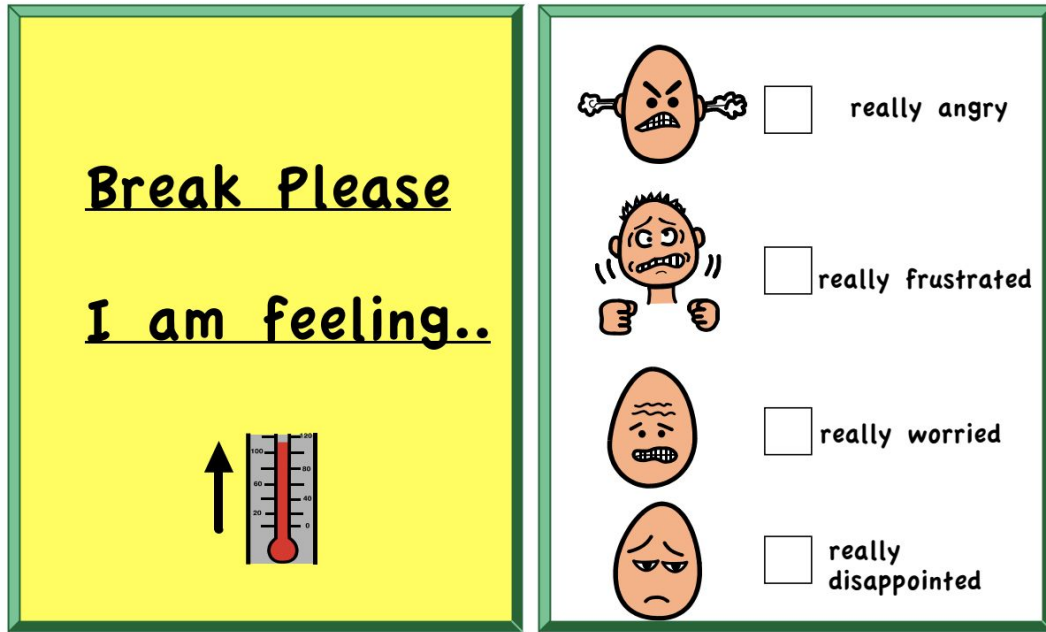
Implementation

- If you track the level of arousal before and after the activity patterns may emerge
- [Sensory Diet Worksheet](#)
- Consult with an O.T. to further develop this strategy

Getting Back to Work

- Set the tone - we are doing this for 10 minutes then math
- Use a [visual strategy/schedule](#)
- Be consistent
- End with “deep pressure” activities like wall push vs ending with jumping jacks
- Begin the transition in the “just right” arousal level

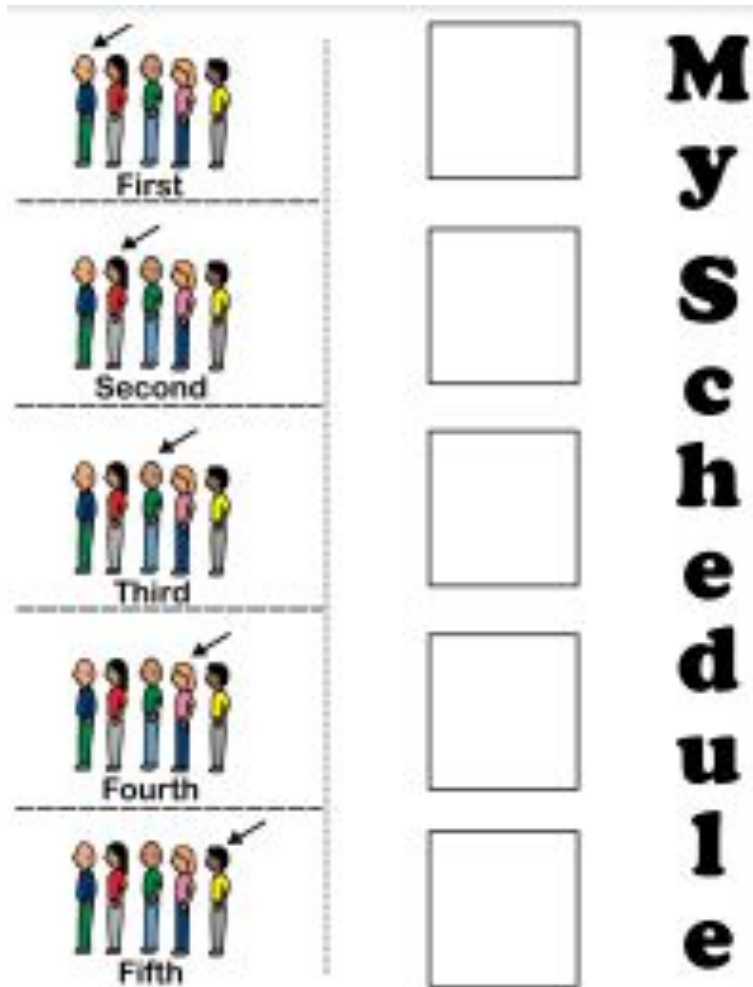
Visual Supports



[Link to Template:](#)

- Addresses problems with sequential memory
- Gives a sense of control and accomplishment for daily activities
- Can lessen anxiety in those with Autism
- Assists in transitioning independently

Visual Schedules



| | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Lunch Time | Computer | Reading | Math |
| Literacy | Art | Music | Story Time |
| Breakfast | morning circle | choice time | Library |
| Yoga | one-on-one work | Smart board | Backpack |
| snack | recess | Homework | Listening Station |

My Flap Schedule Template

Visual Supports

COOL DOWN

1. Choose a chiller.



2. Set timer.



3. Join class when you're ready!



[Choose a Chiller](#)

Fidgets



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Fidgets Can

Help with

- attention
- focus
- sensory processing



Rules for Introducing Fidgets

- Should not be a distraction
- Set expectations and how and when they are used
- Consider a “[Fidget Contract](#)” to set expectations
- Review the plan to see its effectiveness



[Article - 9 Teacher Approved Fidgets](#)

Steps for Introducing Fidgets

- Step 1 - **Explain** it's one tool in the kid's toolbox (**not a toy**)
- Step 2 - Identify **when** it will be used
- Step 3 - Set clear **rules** such as:

Rule 1 - Think before you grab a fidget

Rule 2 - You can only use it to focus... not play

Rule 3 - Don't distract others

Rule 4 - Put it back when done



Options for Fidgets

[Pencil Topper Fidget](#)

[Theraputty / Play Dough](#)

[Sensory Dough/Kinetic Sand](#)

[Giant Nut and Bolt](#)

[Boinks Marble Fidget](#)

[Koosh Ball](#)

[Brain Noodles](#)

[Link to TherapyShope Fidgets](#)



Pressure Clothing & Weighted Items

- Deep pressure can help kids relax and improve attention
- Weighted materials (toys, blankets, lap pads) can be calming
- Pressure vests and tight-fitting sports shirts can be worn under clothing to help relaxation



\$82.95

Tools to Get “Just Right”

Abilitations Weighted Fidget

- Tactile discrimination
- Finger strength
- Motor planning
- 9x10 inches



\$46.09

Set of 5

Tools to Get “Just Right”

Weighted Fidget Lizard

- For busy hands that need an outlet
- Travel friendly
- Ages 4+



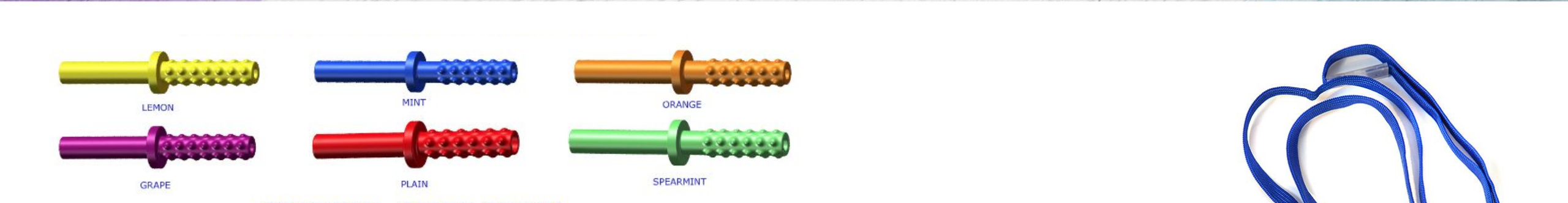
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Oral Sensory Input (Chewing)

- Chewing and sucking helps some kids focus
- Plan snacks/lunches with crunchy or chewy foods Ex: bagels, raw veggies
- Talk to the child about what they want
- Include a sport bottle top or straw for sucking



Oral Sensory Input (Chewing)



ORIGINAL CHEW STIXX



<http://www.chewstixx.com/>



Sensory Activities and Resources

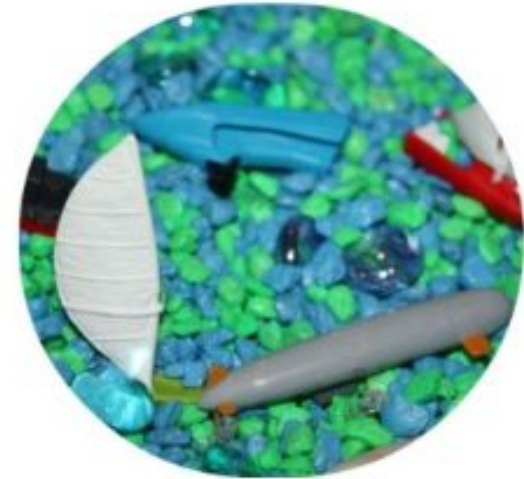


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Examples of sensory based activities

- Sensory bags
- Sensory bins
- Sensory bottles
- Busy Bags



Sensory Bags



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What are sensory bags?

Small plastic bags filled with a variety of fillers such as hair gel, beads, rice or sand.

Why make a sensory bag?

- **Provide the child the opportunity to use many of their senses to explore and learn**
- **Thematic bags provide a learning opportunity to include literacy and word work through a sensory experience**
- **Conduct a brief assessment**
- **Provide sensory experience to use as a calming tool**

Example of a sensory bag



Sensory Bins



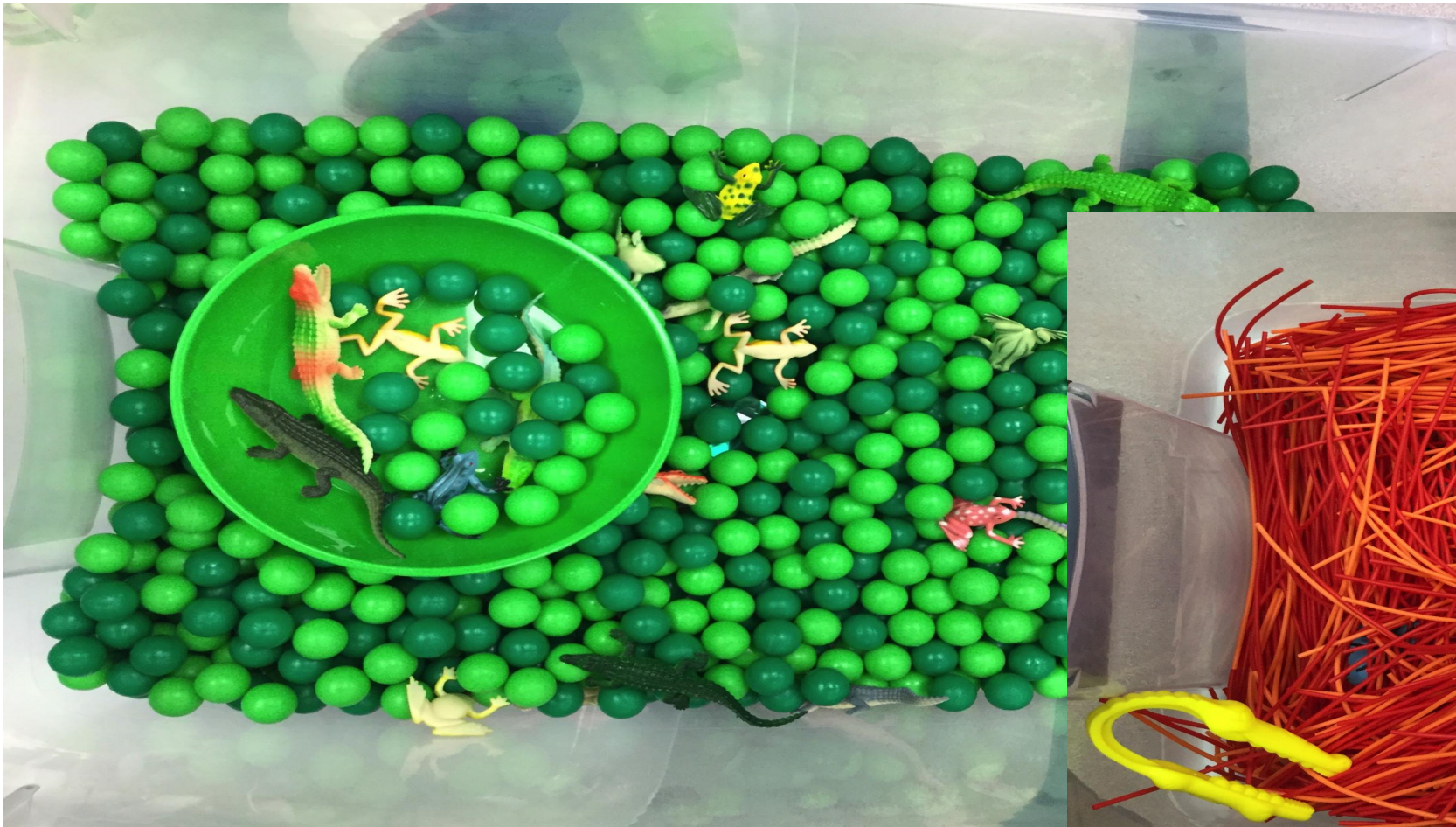
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What is a sensory bin?

A simple container filled with a filler
(Ex: rice, beads, beans, sand, balls, water etc.)

Examples of sensory bins



Sensory Bins cont.



Why make a sensory bin?

To teach:

Practical Life Skills - let the learner explore and using practical skills such as scooping, dumping and filling

Why make a sensory bin?

To teach:

Play Skills - social and independent play are possible

Why make a sensory bin?

To teach:

Language Development - experiencing with their hands all there is to see and do leads to great conversations and opportunities to model language.

Why make a sensory bin?

To teach:

Understanding Body Senses - Children can experience sensations in several senses at a time.

How to make a sensory bin?

1. Choose a bin
2. Choose a filler
3. Add a scoop or shovel
4. Choose a theme



[Little Binds for Little Hands](#)

How to make a sensory bin?

Step 1: Choose a bin- clear storage containers work well. A good size is 25 qt with measurements of 24" long, 15" wide and 6" deep. This does not have to be exact.

How to make a sensory bin?

Step 2: Choose a filler- Examples include rice, sand, water, gel beads, aquarium rocks and birdseed.

How to make a sensory bin?

Step 3: Choose a theme- Add toys or accessories to match your theme.

Example theme: “Pirates”- suggested materials include beach toys, doubloons, ocean animal toys and boats.

Calming Bottles



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What is a calming bottle?

- A bottle containing liquid designed to slow the effects of gravity and movement on objects placed in the bottle.
- The bottle can contain toys, glitter, glow sticks and anything that swirls or reflects light works well.

How to make a calming bottle?

- Fill a plastic bottle with a liquid that may contain glue to slow the flow.
- Insert toys, glitter etc. into the bottle
- Seal the lid on the bottle using glue to avoid spills.

Examples of Calming Bottles



Adaptive Seating



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Wobble Chair



\$59.99-79.99

- Great for those who wiggle and wobble while they work
- Available in 3 sizes
- Ages 4-10

[Wobble Chair](#)

Bumpy Seat



\$13.99

[Bumpy Seat](#)

- Also called a stability disc
- Available in many colors
- Very common, available on Amazon
- Different texture on each side

Peanut Ball



\$49.95

Peanut Ball

- Challenges students to stabilize their core
- Great floor activity for those in a wheelchair
- Fun alternative to a therapy ball

Conclusions



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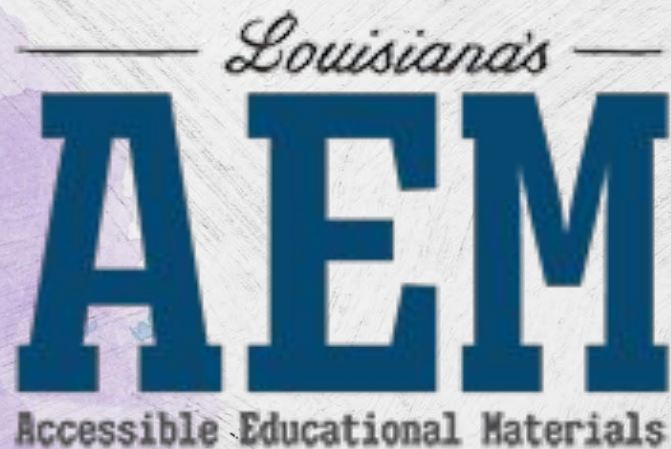
Conclusions

- 15-20 minutes of structured, organized motor activities/exercises offered 2-3 times a day
- Helps with sensory processing and learning difficulties
- Can calm and focus attention
- Fidget items, pressure clothing and oral sensory items can help children self regulate

Conclusions

- Look at the child's routine
- Offer activities before a difficult task
- It's a lifestyle
- Most effective when used in combination with other interventions

QUESTIONS??



Resources and Important Links

[Louisiana AEM Service Request Form](#)

[Understood.org Sensory Diet Webinar](#)

[Link to: Adapted Books and Sensory Kits LiveBinder](#)

[Link to: Learn and Explore with Task Boxes LiveBinder](#)

[How O.T. Helps with Sensory Processing](#)

[Snoezelen Adapted Play Resources - Southeastern University](#)

[LA Human Development Center - Online Autism Modules](#)

[Developmental FX -The Sensory Diet Concept](#)

[Video on Visual Supports Damar Productions](#)

[Sensory Smarts - Sensory Diet Activities](#)

[OCALI - Sensory Processing Scale](#)

[Dr. Temple Grandin's Website](#)

[Video - Temple Grandin on Sensory Processing](#)

[Sesame St. - Meet Julia](#)

Sensory Diets

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COVER TITLE 1



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COVER TITLE 2

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SECTION TITLE 1

SECTION TITLE 2

Content



SECTION TITLE 3

with Subtitle

Content *or* Image

Content 1

Content, full page

Content 2

Content Column 1

Content Column 2

Content 3

Content

Call out box