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Louisiana Accessible Educational Materials
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
Sensory Processing
Sensory Information

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

Understood.org - Sensory Diets Webinar
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

From Understood.org

[Video - Temple Grandin on Sensory Processing](#)
[Video-Sesame St. Meet Julia](#)
Sensory Diets
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

*Understood.org - Sensory Activities*
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*
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
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
• 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

- 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

My Flap Schedule Template
Visual Supports

**Cool Down**

1. Choose a chiller.
   - ![Chiller](image)
2. Set timer.
   - ![Timer](image)
3. Join class when you're ready!
   - ![Thumb up](image)

**Choose a Chiller**
Fidgets
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 TherapyShoppe 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+

$19.99
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)

http://www.chewstixx.com/

http://www.chewstixx.com/
Sensory Activities and Resources
Examples of sensory based activities

• Sensory bags
• Sensory bins
• Sensory bottles
• Busy Bags
Sensory Bags
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
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

Louisiana Accessible Educational Materials
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
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
Wobble Chair

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

$59.99-79.99
Bumpy Seat

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

$13.99
Peanut Ball

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

$49.95
Conclusions
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??
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<td><strong>Understood.org Sensory Diet Webinar</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Link to: Adapted Books and Sensory Kits LiveBinder</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Link to: Learn and Explore with Task Boxes LiveBinder</strong></td>
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Sensory Diets

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