



Embedding a Sensory Approach in SEN Schools: It's Not Just a Fidget Toy

Nadine Stacey

BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy

Post Graduate Certificate in Sensory Integration

Aoife Garvey

BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy

Paediatric Occupational Therapists

Back Ground Information



Occupational Therapy Service at Booker Park School ©



Regulation/attention and emotional well-being

- Zones of Regulation
- Sensory regulation provision
- Ayres Sensory Integration® therapy
- Swing Room sessions/ programmes
- Interoception awareness programmes
- Assistance with Yoga programmes

Play and leisure

- Creativity
- Messy Play
- Wheelchair skills
- Smart moves programme
- Fun with Food
- Hand function

Sensory Processing

- Zones of Regulation
- Interoception awareness programmes
- Sequential Oral Sensory (SOS)® Feeding/Fun with Food
- Ayres Sensory Integration®/motor programmes
- Swing Room programmes
- Tactile / messy play/ hand groups
- Therapeutic Listening/ Quick Shifts
- Visual attention and perception activities
- Sensory strategy advice/ sensory diet

Access to learning

- Fine motor skills
- Handwriting/typing skills
- Mark making
- Visual perception
- Seating
- Zones of Regulation

Relationships and Social Interaction

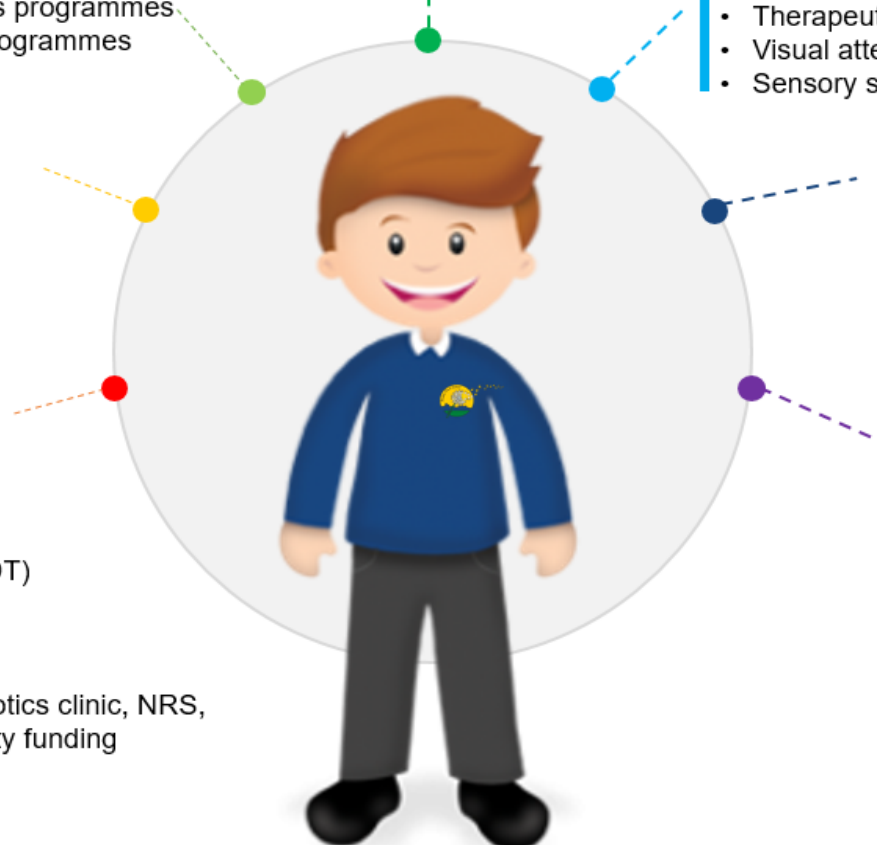
- Staff and parent training
- SCERTS
- Attendance at Annual Reviews
- Internal Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)
- Supporting families
- OT students placements
- Clinical supervision
- Liaison with external agencies: orthotics clinic, NRS, community OT, reps, housing, charity funding
- CPD at PACE
- SEN clinical excellence network

Self-care

- Dressing groups/programmes
- Eating and drinking independence skills: self-feeding programmes, equipment provision/recommendation, oral motor skills, liaison with SALT
- Food preparation
- Toileting

Posture, movement and body awareness

- Body awareness/ Interoception groups
- Mat Man/ Body Scheme
- Sensory motor programmes
- Visual perception
- Wheelchair skills/ clinic
- SMILE powered platform drive
- Seating and postural management
- Upper limb advice/stretch programmes
- Lycra assessment/ advice
- Assistance with Yoga programmes

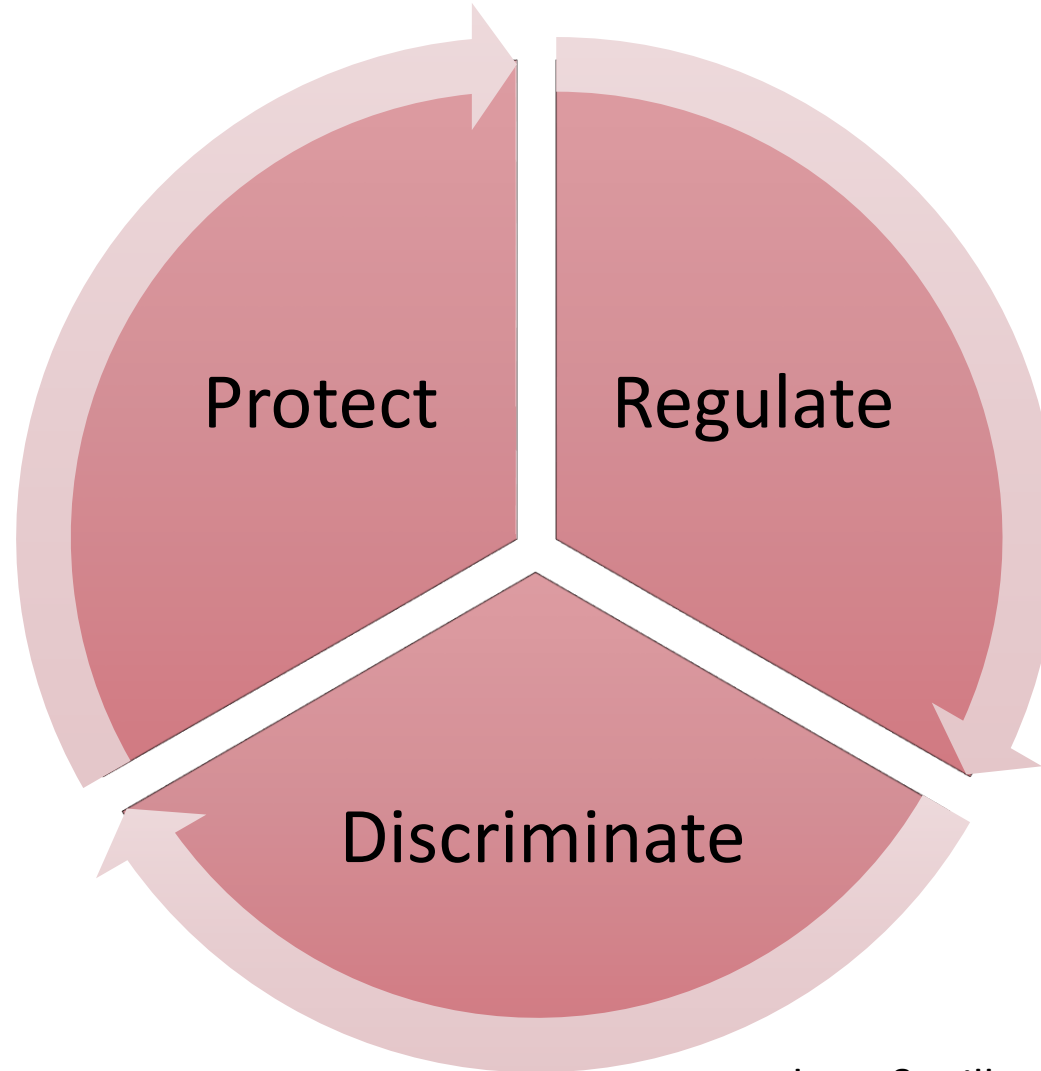


Objectives



- Guiding Principles
- Illustrate Examples
- Process & tips for success









What sensation does for us?



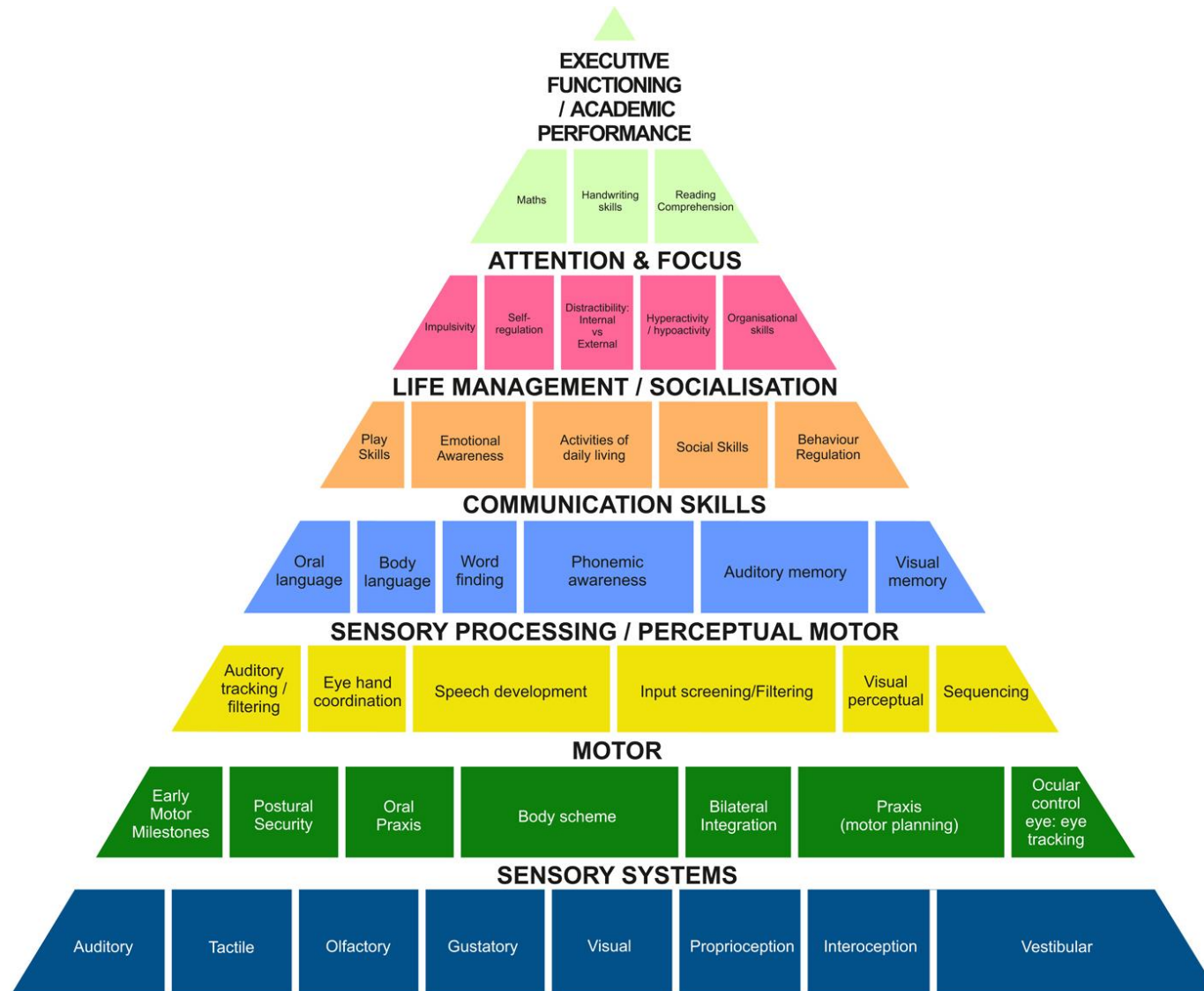
The 8 Sensory Systems



The Sensory Systems

Tactile 	Touch response to shape, size, texture and temperature	Gustatory 	Taste (salty, spicy, bitter, sweet and sour)
Auditory 	Hearing in terms of loudness, direction, interpretation	Vestibular 	Position and movement in relation to gravity
Visual 	Seeing in terms of brightness, shapes, interpretation	Proprioception 	Joint and muscle sensation (pressure and force)
Olfactory 	Smells (pleasant, unpleasant, dangerous)	Interoreception 	Sensation originating in the body; the physiological 'feelings' of the body parts (pain, temp, itch, hunger, thirst, stomach ache...)

The Senses as a Foundation



www.maximumpotential.org.uk
(2020)

Sensory Modulation



Our nervous systems' ability to register and integrate sensory input and then conduct an appropriate response. = **Self-Regulation**

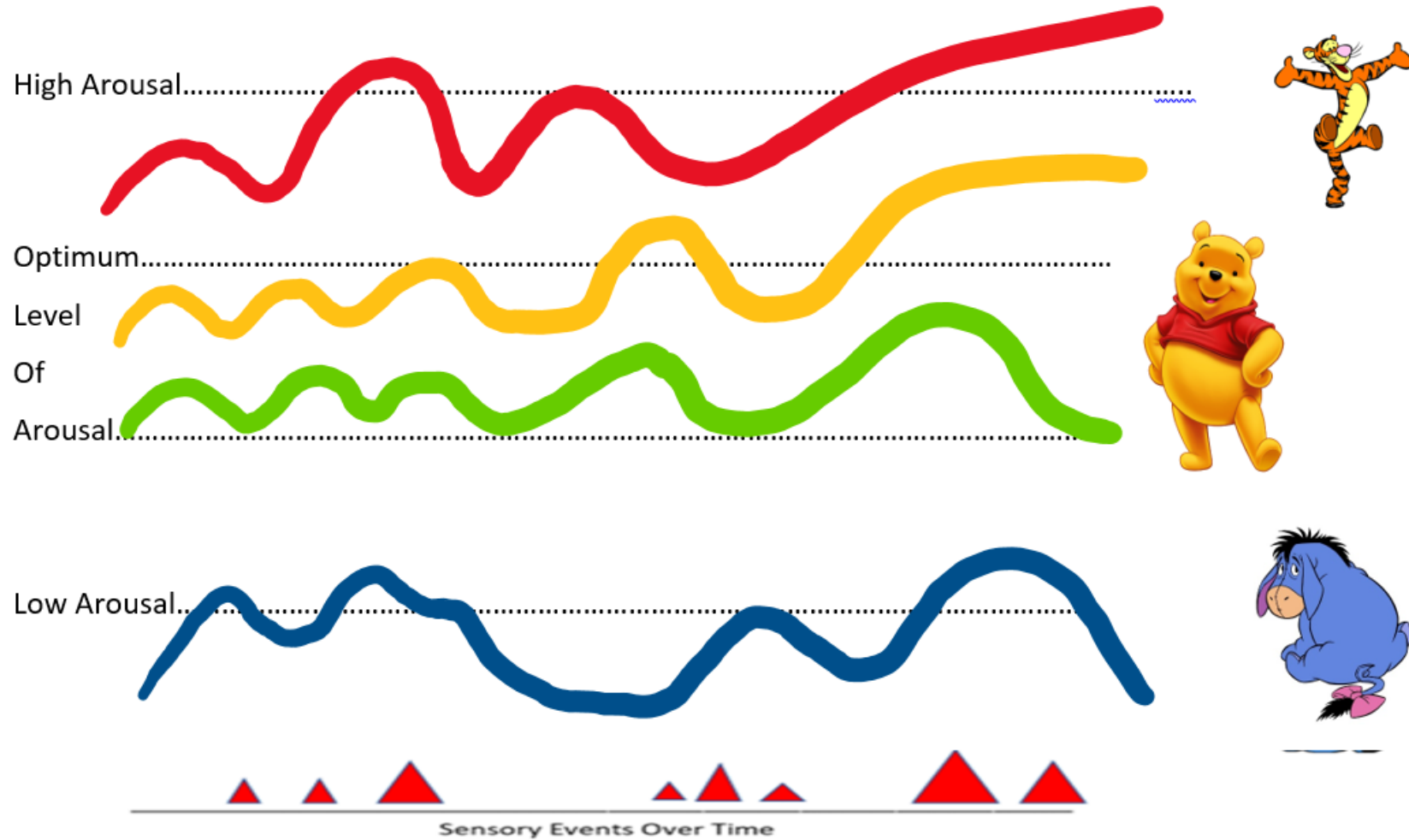
The **under-responsive** child does not seem to notice inputs from one or more sensory systems and may be very passive

The **sensory seeking** child craves excessive stimulation from one or more sensory systems

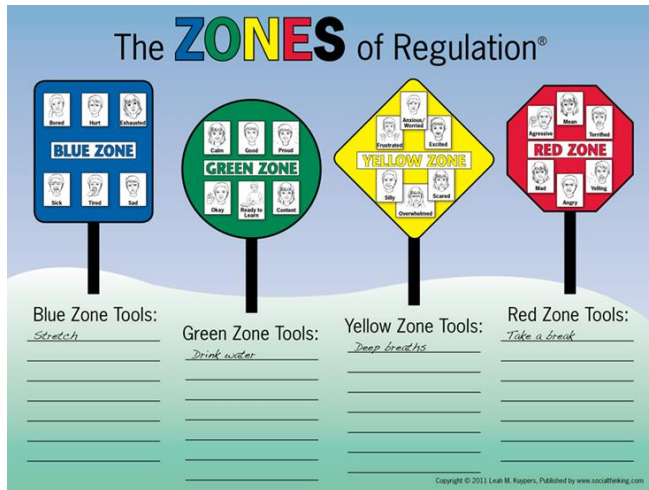
The sensory avoiding child is **over-responsive** to sensations from one or more sensory systems, this can show as passivity or aggression/force so as to avoid.



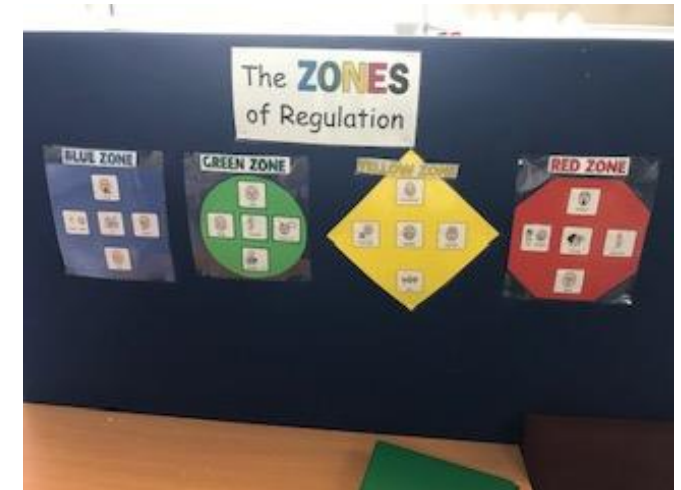
Level of arousal



Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, L. 2011)



The framework provides strategies to teach students to become more aware of and independent in controlling their emotions and impulses, manage their sensory needs, and improve their ability to problem solve conflicts.



SCERTS[®] (Prizant, B.M., et al. 2007)



Mutual Regulation

I will use language strategies to request a regulating activity. (MR3.6)

When my partners:

- Are responsive to my emotions and arousal level.
- Support me with visuals and the Zones of Regulation programme.
- Direct me to choose an activity/item from a selection of visuals when I'm showing signs of dysregulation.
- Direct me to use my talker/visual communication board to say what is upsetting me.

**Social Communication,
Emotional Regulation,
Transactional Supports**

Self-Regulation

I will use behavioural strategies modelled by partner to regulate my arousal level (SR 2.2).

When my partners:

- Help me to explore a range of sensory strategies & equipment
- Use consistent language and visuals to help me understand my arousal level
- Show me visuals to support options available.

Our Integrated Approach



- Equipment e.g. weighted backpacks, ear defenders
- Classroom space e.g. cosy corner, low stimulation environment
- Seating e.g. Zuma, ball chair, anti-gravity chair
- Sensory circuits
- Sensory diets
- Swing room
- Sensory exploration groups e.g. Zones of Regulation
- Sensory strategies e.g. tactile, massage, oral motor, etc.
- Yoga

Specialist Sensory Equipment



Choice Board

Light, Medium, Heavy Weighted Backpacks



Chewy

Sensory Toolbox



The Classroom Environment



Sensory Seating



Sensory Circuits



1. Alerting



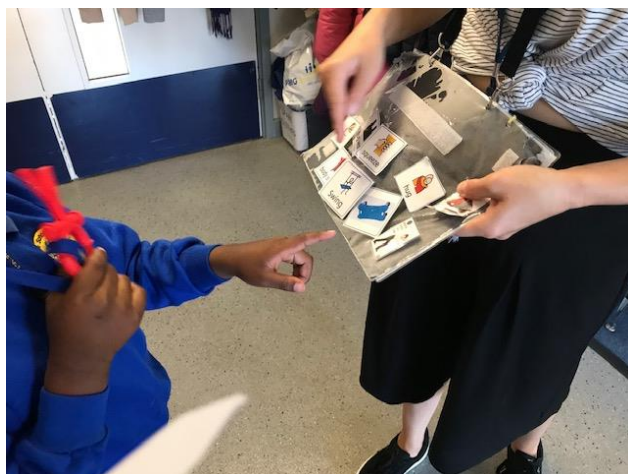
2. Organizing



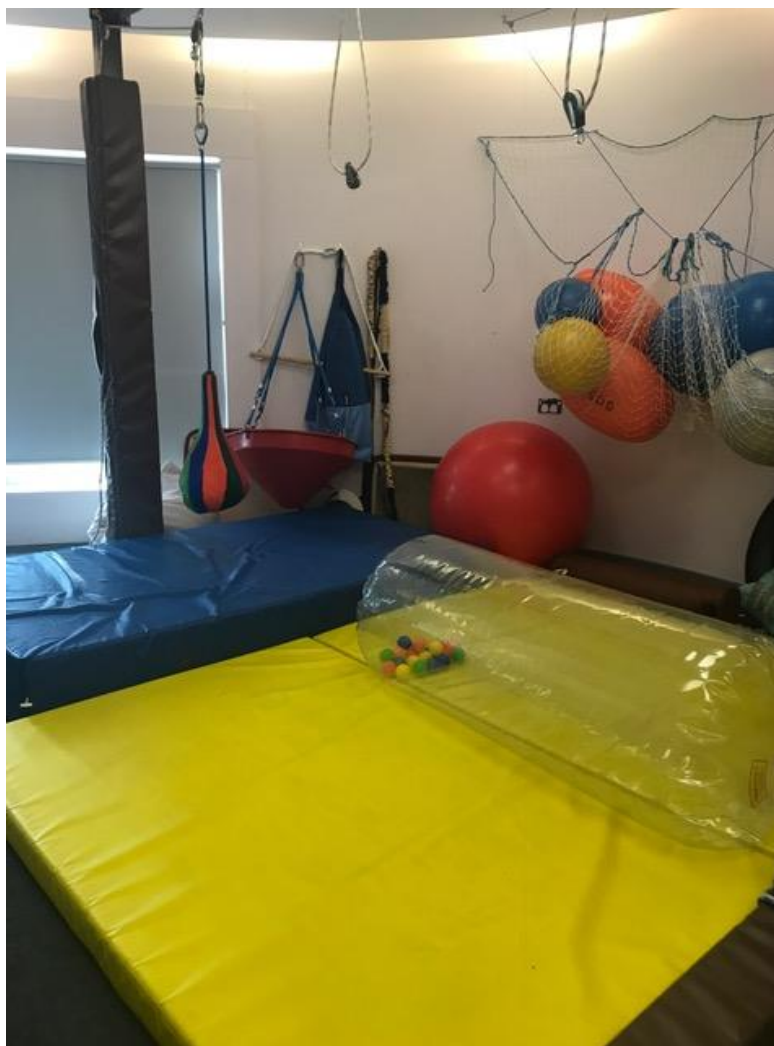
3. Calming



Individual Sensory Tools



Specialist Swing Room



Sensory Assessment

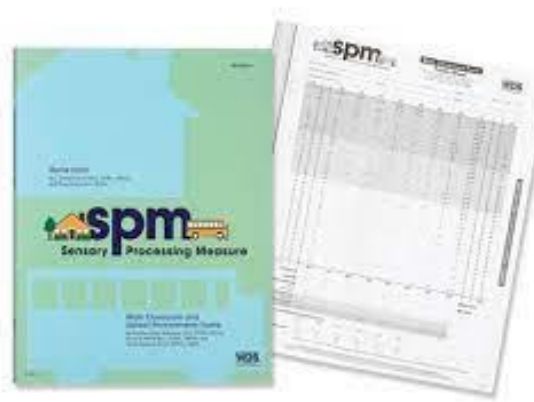


Interoceptive Awareness Questionnaire

Child's Name: X	Class: X	Date: X	Form completed by: X
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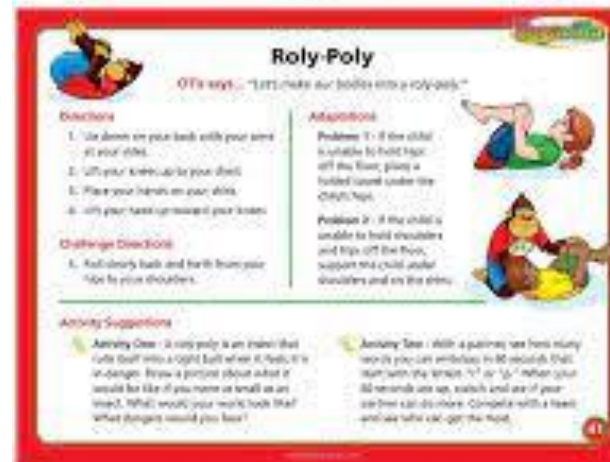
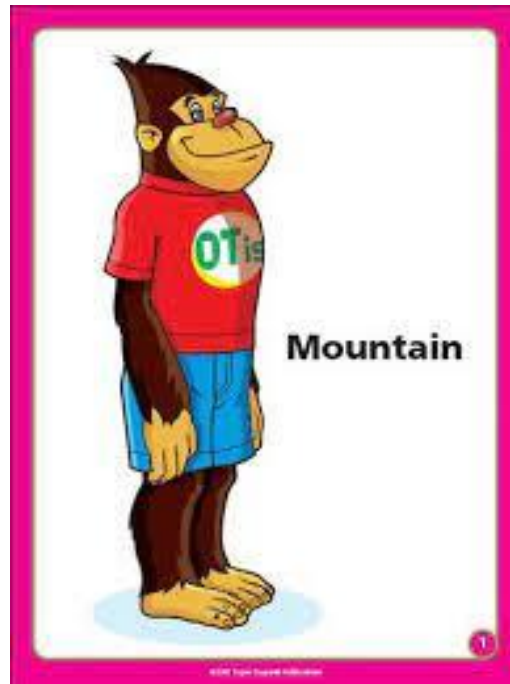
	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
I know when I feel....				
Hot		✓		
Cold			✓	
Hungry	✓			
Thirsty			✓	
Happy			✓	
Sad			✓	
Tired				✓
Angry				✓
Wet		✓		
Dry				✓
I know when I....				
Need the toilet			✓	
Feel poorly				✓
Am in pain				✓

Any other comments:



Oral Motor Input			
Date:	Like/Dislike	Calmed or Alerted	Other Comments/Help needed to complete
Finger to nose breathing			
Deep belly breathing			
Blowing bubbles			
Blowing feather			
Blowing pom-pom ball			
Blowing air through straw			
Blowing feather or pom-pom ball with straw			
Figure of eight breathing			
Six sides of breathing			
Lip Whistles			

Yoga



Training



- ½ day training as part of all staff induction with regular refreshers
- Separate Zones of Regulation training
- SCERTS training
- Targeted training specific to a child's sensory needs
- Offer Pace 2 day training for staff working with complex children
- Parent training days on Zones/ sensory strategies etc.

Tips for Success



- Education is key!
- A whole school approach
- Having the OT team based within the school
- Regular monitoring and review from the OT team
- Rolling education on site for staff
- Open communication with staff, parents & wider community

Service Progression



- SOS Feeding
- Interoception
- New and emerging equipment
- Transferring the model of practice to other schools in the local area



Thank You



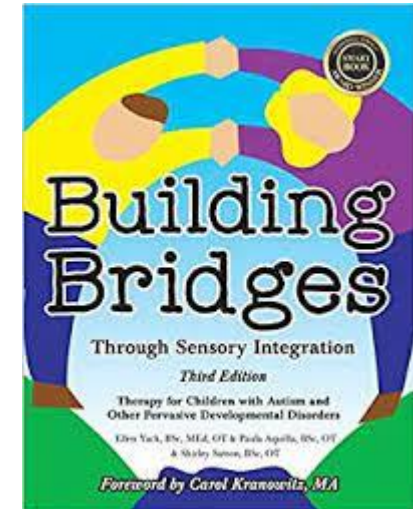
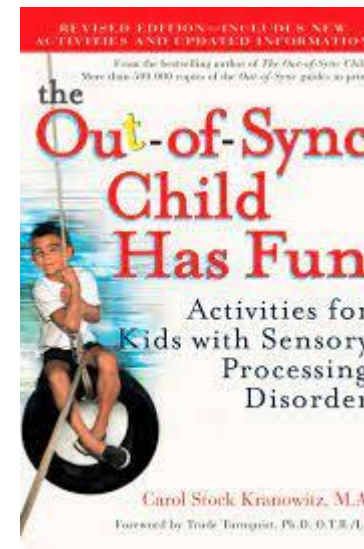
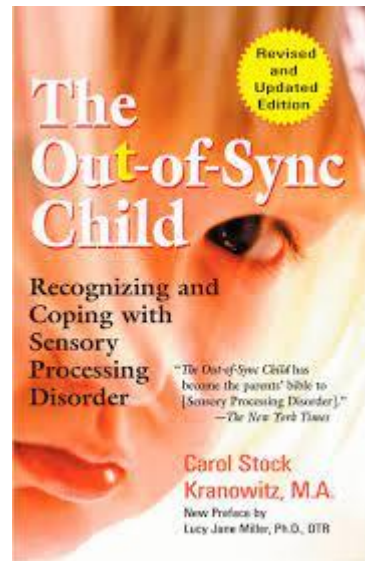
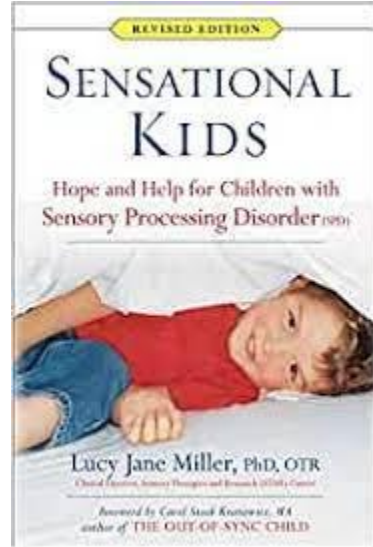
- Thank you to the staff and management of The Vale Federation & The Pace Centre
- Any questions?
- For further enquires:
 - nadine.stacey@thepacecentre.org
 - aoife.garvey@thepacecentre.org

References



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Useful Books/ Bibliography



The Sunflower Project

Jo Rountree – Highly Specialist Occupational Therapist

South Tees Foundation Trust

Vicky Baker – Highly Specialist Occupational Therapist

North Tees Foundation Trust

Rachael Wilcox – Designated Clinical Officer Tees Valley CCG



Where it all began

Diagnosis focussed through collaboration with families and working with St Helen's CCG we developed a needs led pathway.

Waiting lists for an OT are ever increasing and the demand was around sensory provision, We wanted to produce a pathway that empowered families and gave the right support to children.

NR money was used £61k for one year to develop the pathway and embed it into the system. The idea being to enable a reduction in waiting time for OT, caseload numbers. This would lead to a pathway change to improve flow through the service. If additional input is needed the focus will be on joint commissioning OT longer term.

Band 6 (37.5) and band 3 (13 hours) back fill. Chose to do this so the programme planning could start and the new staff could be used to develop other areas of the pathway.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

360 children and families through the pathway in 12 months.

260 other professionals trained (school, 0-19, social care staff etc)

What is the sunflower project?

Two elements parental and professional.

Parental Ethos – Needs led education programme that empowers parents to help understand their child and how they impact and change between environments. This is very focused on the child's needs.

Professional Ethos – More generic and educational to help the staff understand how this can affect a child's participation within learning and make referrals more appropriate.

How do you access it?

Parent training is accessed through a professional referral only. This can be a GP, doctor, therapist or school SENCO.

Education training is an opt in system. Any school can ring up and book on to the twilight session. This can be held in school or in the child development centre. This is free to schools.

What does the process look like?

Firm rules around behaviour and the running of the group.

2 qualified OT's running the session (3 in the third session in Middlesbrough)

12 families Redcar and Cleveland and 22 families in Middlesbrough

Parent training:

- 3 consecutive sessions 2.5 hours each
- First session – theory based
- Second Session – Getting the child into the 'just right' frame of mind
- Third session – Practical strategies on how to help, this is very parent led
- Parents work through a work book

Professional training:

2 one week, 3 next week and once a month at the CDC and any adhoc session would be done on site.

One OT

- 1 off session 1.5 hours
- How senses affect the child – Over/under responsive
- Just right frame of mind
- Developing a pack of strategies that can be executed in the classroom
- School receive a booklet as a resource

Positives

Professionals understanding about how a child needs a joint or tripartite responsibility has improved meaning a more holistic understanding for the child.

Built relationships with education partners and schools to build bridges.

Parents have commented that the training has helped their understanding where previous private reports have been over complicated. They have felt enabled to respond to their own child's changing needs and how to adapt to those which we anticipate will impact on re-referral rates.

We found that some other professionals were saying 'its sensory' and discharging without input and actually by empowering the parent and school they are more able to challenge that and say well this bit is... but we really don't think this bit is... allowing needs to be met more quickly.

Parents and professionals feel more able to question and reflect on themselves.

Challenges

COVID – getting people in and venue arrangements – however this is easing a bit.

Moving forward – we only have money for 12 months then the service will be absorbed with the aim of the waiting list being reduced

Parents initially were cross because they had been on a waiting list and wanted a face to face initial assessment. With some discussion and negotiation have actually come out of the pathway feeling more empowered than previously.

Parents who couldn't attend all of them through their own appointments or being away affects the continuity

How are we measuring success

KPI's – 360 families through parent

260 education staff/professionals through the system

Parents are given a score sheet about how well they feel they understand sensory process and how equipped they feel to deal with their child. This is repeated at the end of the programme. We want to see 75% of families and professionals feel more empowered and more equipped at the end of the 12 months

Was a 52 week wait now a 40 week wait South Tees

Qualitative feedback

Parents quotes

"I think this training was fantastic. I have a lot better understanding now. I've been on private training but this training was outstanding and really opened my eyes. Thank you"

"The sunflower programme has been invaluable to me as a mother of an autistic boy, who struggles daily with Sensory issues. . I believe there should be more help/ courses/ guidance for parents like myself.

I have been banging my head against the wall for a long time. There is just no help/ support/ guidance out there for families with children who are autistic. THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE LIKE THIS."

"Brilliant course. Thankyou thoroughly enjoyed it and it has helped break down his senses"

"A great informative course. Thank you for your help"

Thank you
Questions?

