

# SENSORY PROCESSING CHALLENGES & O.T. TECHNIQUES

*from Sensory Integration International and American Occupational Therapy Association*



Pathways to  
Permanence 2

Parenting  
Children  
Who Have  
Experienced  
Trauma  
AND LOSS

Session 7

Parenting  
the Child  
with Drug  
and Alcohol  
Exposure

Parent's  
Toolbox

**Many children who have been exposed in utero to drugs and/or alcohol experience varying degrees of sensory processing difficulties. According to Sensory Integration International (SII), some signs of sensory processing difficulties include the following:**

- Over sensitivity to touch, movement, sights or sounds
- Under reactivity to touch, movement, sights or sounds
- Tendency to be easily distracted
- Social and/or emotional problems
- Activity level that is unusually high or low
- Physical clumsiness or apparent carelessness
- Impulsive, lacking in self-control
- Difficulty in making transitions from one situation to another
- Inability to unwind or calm self
- Poor self-concept
- Delays in speech, language or motor skills
- Delays in academic achievement

**Occupational Therapy that uses a sensory integration approach can assist children with sensory processing difficulties in the following areas:**

- Daily living skills
- Intellectual, social, and emotional development
- Development of positive self-esteem
- Preparing the mind and body for learning
- Development of more functional and adaptive responses in a variety of settings
- Achievement of normal developmental milestones

**Just a few examples of the types of activities that an Occupational Therapist will use to assist with sensory integration include:**

- Working with Play Doh, dough or clay for children with tactile defensiveness
- Physical activities such as jumping, bouncing, rocking, etc., for children with high arousal levels
- Prescribing aids to assist with sleeping, such as sound machines, weighted blankets, aromatherapy
- Sand and water play which are also helpful with tactile defensiveness
- Aromatherapy for calming or stimulating
- Massage and vibration therapies, which can both calm and stimulate
- Body brushing (a technique that should be done only with guidance by an OT)
- Handwriting and other fine motor activities
- Activities that help to distinguish between “how hard” or “how soft” a use of force to use
- Group activities to help with social skills