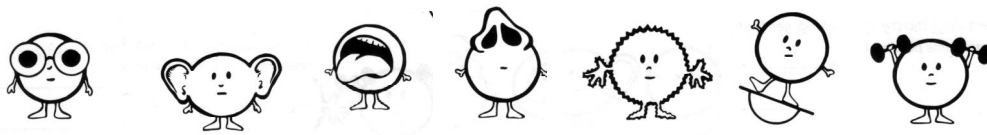


Understanding the Connection Between Sensory Processing and Difficult Behaviors

*Often the sensory processing systems of adopted and foster children are impacted by their histories. As a result, parents must be particularly educated and insightful about the role that sensory processing plays in their child’s life and behaviors. This session will explore the connection that can exist between sensory processing deficits and difficult behaviors, and how parents can more effectively identify, understand and respond to their child’s sensory-driven behaviors.*

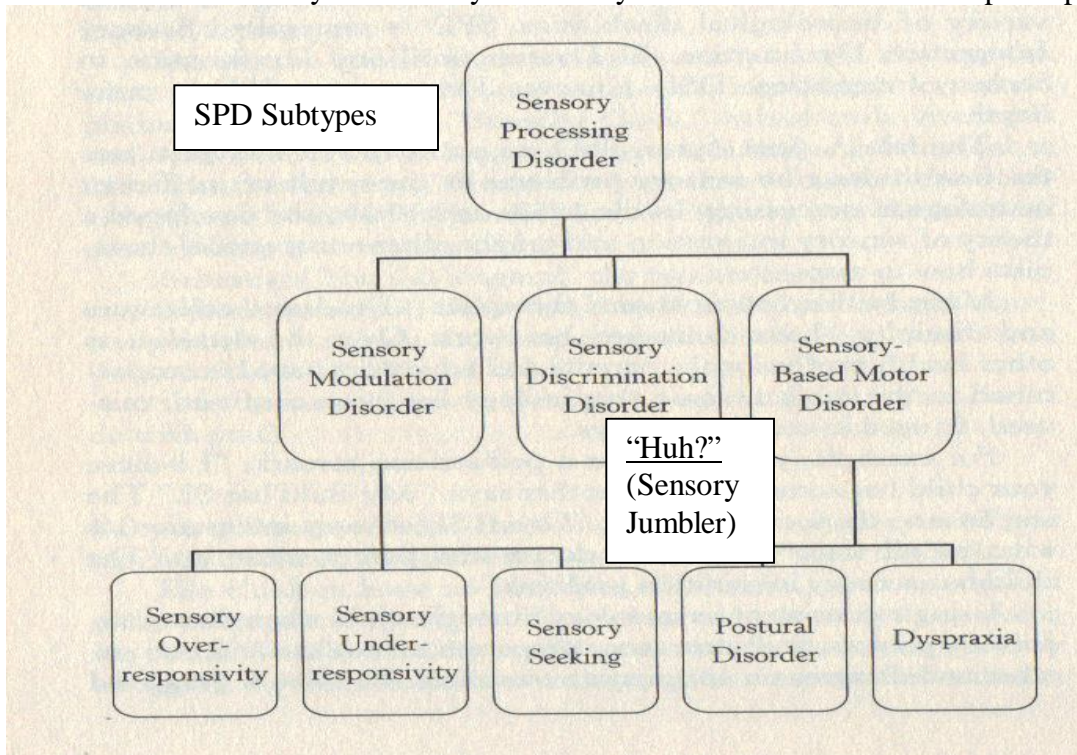
Sensory Processing Disorder/Sensory Issues Overview (What? Who? Why?)

“Sensory Players on the Brain-body team” (Mucklow, Sensory Team Handbook)



Pictures from My Sensory Book. Kerstein

Visual    Auditory    Gustatory    Olfactory    Tactile    Vestibular    Proprioceptive



From The Out of Sync Child, revised ed., Kranowitz

<u>“Oh, no!”</u>	<u>“Ho, hum”</u>	<u>“More!”</u>	<u>“Don’t want to”</u>	<u>“I can’t do that”</u>
(Sensory Avoider)	(Sensory Disregarder)	(Sensory Craver)	(Sensory Slumper)	(Sensory Fumbler)
Picky?	Slow?	Wild?	Lazy?	Messy?

Effects of poor sensory processing

Behavior and Over –reactivity/under-reactivity

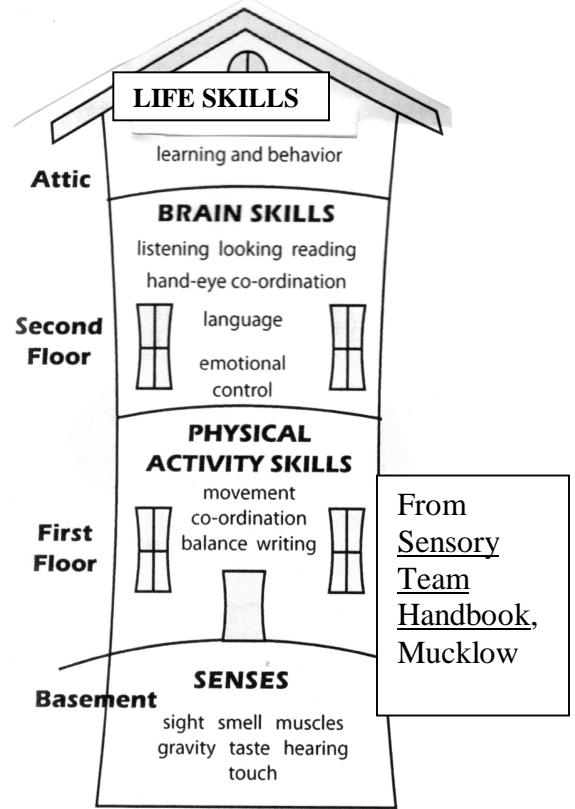
Manifestations in Everyday life (Where and When)

Behavior Overview

Motivators (Rewards/Consequences) vs. Training

*“Consequences are wonderful when they work. They are less wonderful when they don’t work. And often they don’t work for the kids to whom they are most frequently applied.” (Greene, Lost at School... p. 7)*

*“Kids do well if they can ((Greene, Lost at School...)*



Motivation

		Yes	No
Skills	Yes	Adaptive	Maladaptive *
	No	<u>Maladaptive</u>	<u>Maladaptive</u>

From Lost at School..., Greene

Meltdown vs. Tantrum (see [www.hartleysboys.com/2010/05/sensory-detective.html](http://www.hartleysboys.com/2010/05/sensory-detective.html))

Can look the same but have different causes (necessitate different approaches)

\* *Tantrum – manipulative fit*

Meltdown – *emotional response*

Sensory Behavior and Traditional Methods

*“The hallmark of children with Sensory Processing Disorder is that their sensory difficulties are chronic and disrupt their everyday life. Children with SPD get “stuck.” And no matter what strategies a determined parent uses – stickers on a chart, praise, discipline, or some technique another parent said worked magic for them – kids with SPD stay stuck.” (Miller, Sensational Kids, p.13)*

## Sensory vs. “Willful” Behavior

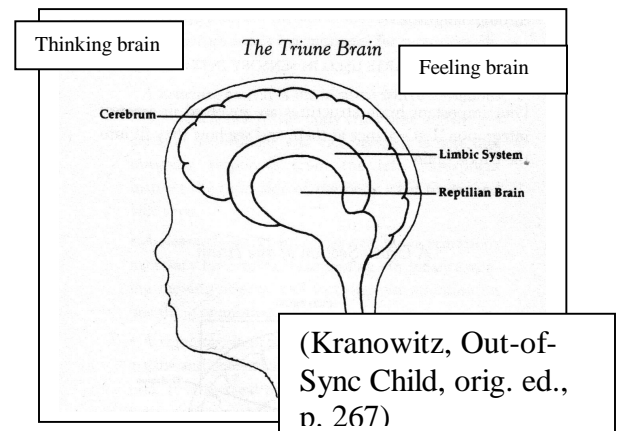
*“It is impossible for a child to behave normally if his body and brain are exchanging misinformation.” (p.106, The Sensory Sensitive Child, Smith and Gouze)*

*Each of us acts in accordance with the information our senses feed us. ...To grasp this concept requires a paradigm shift from viewing behavior as primarily psychologically motivated to seeing it as an end product of sensory processing.” (p.14, Too Loud, Too Bright, Too Fast, Too Tight, Heller)*

## Inconsistency

*One of the things that often happens is that a child with sensory integration problems, if they really put 100% effort into doing something, they get it done. But none of us can put out that kind of effort all the time. When a parent or a teacher sees a child do something once in awhile, they think “Oh, she can do it and maybe she’s just not motivated, she’s just not trying. So parents often attribute a behavioral reason when a task is hard or left undone.” (Dr. Jane Koomar, spdfoundation.net, from the audiotape Making Sense of Sensory Integration)*

## “Lens Shift”



Fight-Flight-Freeze (Fright)  
“Survival” Brain

Why?  
Lack of Motivation?  
Unmet Need?  
Skill Deficiency?  
Sensory Response?

## Out of Bounds Behavior! What now?

1. Take a breath (or 10) and a step back.
2. EMPATHY
3. Stay in your thinking brain
4. Coax your child back into his thinking brain/disarm the fear (fright – fight-flight-freeze)

(Know what disarms your child’s fear – playful interaction? soothing auditory input? firm but gentle tactile input? vestibular input (rocking, walking, etc.)?)

Then

5. Become a TRIGGER DETECTIVE

Antecedents (a.k.a Triggers) from No More Meltdowns by Baker

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| *Internal or Biological Triggers | *Waiting (skill deficiency or unmet need) |
| *Sensory Stimulation             | *Threats to Self-Image (unmet need)       |
| *Lack of Structure               | *Unmet Wishes for Attention (unmet need)  |
| *Demands (skill deficiency)      |   |

- \* “Is there a strong auditory element to the experience? Tactile? Vestibular? Proprioceptive? Visual? Smell or taste?”
  - \* “When was the last time he engaged in this behavior? Has he behaved this way more than once? Was there a common element?”
  - \* Is he experiencing a transition that may be too abrupt or jarring?
  - \* Is there a lack of predictability?
- (p. 62-3, Raising a Sensory Smart Child, Biel and Peske)

6. Try Modification/Adaptation/ Accommodation

7. Take Preventative Measures

Modification/Adaptation/ Accommodation

(changes to the requirements/environment)/(tools for your child)

Prevention

Sensory Diet (The Out of Sync Child Has Fun, [www.hartleysboys.com](http://www.hartleysboys.com))

Support Self-Regulation (How does your Engine Run?) paper plate/gas tank visual

Empowerment

Preparation

Workbooks – see below by age

Rituals (I Love You Rituals, Bailey)

Books/Stories

Relationship

Brain-body Connection

Organizing Movements

Developmental Progression/Movements (neurodevelopmental reorganization/retraining)

Cross-Midline (BrainGym)

Weight-bearing

Yoga (Integrated Yoga (2007) by Nicole Cuomo)  
focus on cross-midline and breathing

Applied Brain Research (esp. diet, exercise and varied sensory input)

Fun Family Time/Family “Nurture Group” (patterned after TCU summer camp program – connection (relationship) in a high-nurture environment oozing with positive sensory input)

(Nurture and Repair the fragile, injured brain)

Specific to Age Group

Infant/Toddler (“I have sensory needs!”) read cues, avoid sensory over-stimulation

Preschool (“I do it myself!”) sensory rich environment

Elementary (“independence!”) joint sensory solutions

Middle School/High School (“peers!” hobbies/recreation)  
(YouTube, “Brain Breaks, dsladkey)  
sensory empowerment

Older High school/ Young Adult Children (“respect and acceptance”, vocation choice) (YouTube, “Brain Breaks, dsladkey)  
sensory empowerment

Parents  
sensory clash

### Sensory Issues

International Adoption

Foster Care

Infant Adoption

### Sensory Tips and Tricks

At Home

In Public (grocery store, WalMart, mall, playgrounds, etc.)

In “Your circle” (church, home groups, playgroups, church, etc.)

In School

After school/homework

“Issue clash” (How We Love Our Kids by Milan and Kay Yerkovich

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Behavior Journal (from p. 61, Raising a Sensory Smart Child, Biel)

<u>day &amp; time</u>	<u>behavior observed</u>	<u>situation</u>	<u>what happened just prior</u>	<u>what helped?</u>

Suitcases – Dara Maclean

How can you move when they're weighing you down  
What can you do when you're tied to the ground, yeah  
You carry your burdens, heavy like gravity  
Just let them go now, there's freedom in release ...

...Can you imagine what it's like to be free  
Well, send those bags packing, they're not what you need  
Abandon your troubles on the side of the street  
Just let them go now, believe me

You can't run when you're holding suitcases  
It's a new day throw away your mistakes and open up your heart  
Lay down your guard, you don't have to be afraid

Just breathe, your load can be lifted  
There's a better way when you know you're forgiven  
Open up your heart, lay down your guard  
You don't have to be afraid...

Tree-saving note from Kristin - Additional information will be available on my personal (although currently neglected) blog (<http://www.adoptiveot.blogspot.com>)  
-- Book Reviews, Sensory Table, "Quick Calmers", Connecting (Sensory) games/activities, etc.

I can also email ([Kristin.mathis@verizon.net](mailto:Kristin.mathis@verizon.net)) you several potentially helpful resources:

- Sensory Book Worksheet (under-reactive, over-responsive, "just right")
- Two charts detailing differences between ADHD/SPD and ADD/SPD
- "Screener" documents (dependent on child's age)
- "Heavy Work" and Vestibular Ideas for School
- "The 5 Point Scale"

### **Family Resources**

How We Love Our Kids. Milan and Kay Yerkovich

Lost in School. Ross W. Greene (school behavior issues)

When my Worries Get too Big. Kari Dunn Buron

Seeds of Courage (Seeds Family Worship)– scripture based songs great for anxiety and fear

## Sensory Resources

The Everything Parent's Guide to Sensory Integration Disorder: Get the Right Diagnosis, Understand Treatments, And Advocate for Your Child. Mauro and Cermak

The Sensory-Sensitive Child: Practical Solutions for Out-of-bounds Behavior. Karen Smith and Karen Gouze.

The Out of Sync Child..., The Out of Sync Child has Fun, and Growing and In Sync Child... Carol Kranowitz

Sensoryplanet.com (monthly charge) –Has great articles and you can network with other parents. (good way to get a basic understanding/terminology – also covers social learning, “floortime”, collaborative problem solving, IEPs, school behavior, etc.)

www.spdfoundation.net (great resources in drop-down menu, good “technical” articles, “Sensory Processing” blog and “Sensations e-newsletter, as well as an e-store (great for ideas)). Sign-up for newsletter --<http://www.spdfoundation.net/contact.php>

www.hartleysboys.com (great resources for sensory diet and home adaptation ideas – also check out her link to the SPD Blogger Network)

Sensory Processing Disorder AnswerBook. Tara Delaney

Answers to Questions Teachers Ask about Sensory Integration: Forms, Checklists, and Practical Tools for Teachers and Parents. Jane Koomar, Carol Kranowitz, Stacey Szklut [Lynn Balzer-Martin](#), Elizabeth Haber, Deanna Iris Sava

Sensational Kids: Hope and Help for Children with Sensory Processing Disorder. Lucy Jane Miller

Raising a Sensory Smart Child: The Definitive Handbook for Helping Your Child with Sensory Processing Issues. Lindsey Biel and Nancy Peske

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## Resources by age

Infant/Toddler/Preschool - In-sync, Out of ...Has Fun, Growing and In-Sync. Kranowitz

Elementary - My Sensory Book.... Kerstein, ch. 3-end only – 1<sup>st</sup> 3 chapters – poor content )

Middle /High School - Sensory Team Handbook. Mucklow

High School/young adult Highs, Over 150 Ways to Feel Really, REALLY Good... Packer

Adult (sensory defensive) - Too Loud, Too Bright, Too Fast, Too Tight: What to Do If You Are Sensory Defensive in an Overstimulating World. Sharon Heller