



Supporting Infants and Toddlers with Sensory Differences

“Sensory processing refers to how people use the information provided by all the sensations coming from within the body and from the external environment.”

“We usually think of the senses as separate channels of information, but they actually work together to give us a reliable picture of the world and our place in it. Your senses integrate to form a complete understanding of who you are, where you are, and what is happening around you.

Because your brain uses information about sights, sounds, textures, smells, tastes, and movement in an organized way, you assign meaning to your sensory experiences, and you know how to respond and behave accordingly.”
~ *Raising A Sensory Smart Child*

Dr. A. Jean Ayers was a leading occupational therapist who laid the groundwork for understanding sensory integration challenges. In the 1970s, she recognized that impaired or atypical sensory integration interfered with learning and development in the children with whom she worked. Since then, many pediatric occupational therapists and other professionals have built on Dr. Ayers’ work and have reported that approximately 10 to 15 percent of children are impacted by sensory processing challenges. They have found that different sensory preferences and intolerances impact play, learning, social interactions, and everyday activities such as eating, getting dressed, taking a bath, brushing teeth, washing hair, falling asleep, and other routine experiences.

There are specific techniques and strategies that can help improve a child’s ability to integrate, tolerate, and respond to sensory information. Many occupational therapists today are highly trained to help children and their families when impacted by sensory processing or sensory integration challenges. ~ *Raising A Sensory Smart Child*

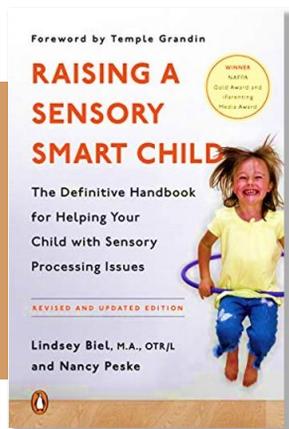
Observing infants and toddlers every day can help us notice how they respond to sensory input related to the stimuli of touch, sight, taste, smell, auditory, vestibular, proprioception, and interoception processes. These eight basic senses work together to provide information to the brain. When a child has a sensitivity in any of these sensory systems, we want to offer support to help the child be comfortable in their environment.

By reflecting on our routines and environments, we can support infants and toddlers in several ways including making modifications to reduce the impact of sensory stimuli that may be overwhelming to certain children.

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE

Raising A Sensory Smart Child: The Definitive Handbook for Helping Your Child with Sensory Processing Issues

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