

Let's Talk Sensory



SEND and
Inclusion



NORTH
YORKSHIRE
COUNCIL



parentcarer voice
NORTH YORKSHIRE
WORKING TOGETHER FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

Olfactory

Sense of smell
Info. received
through the nose

Tactile

Sense of touch
Info. received by
contact through
the skin

Proprioception

Awareness of body
in space and
strength needed to
complete actions

Gustatory

Sense of taste
Info. received
through the mouth

8 SENSES

THE SENSORY SYSTEM

Interoception

Awareness of
internal bodily
states

Vestibular

Sense of balance
and spatial
orientation

Auditory

Sense of sound
Info. received
through the
ear's

Visual

Sense of sight
Info. received
through the
eyes



Over responsive

(sensory system registers too much)

On high alert

Everything is a potential trigger

Behaviour function is to avoid or escape

Cautious with motor activities

Fight/flight reactions

Doesn't like crowds/being touched/getting dirty

Distracted by background visual/noise

May cover ears/eyes, hide under desks, run away, nervous/angry

Motion sickness

Overly emotional

Constant questions

Difficulty with transitions

Under responsive

(sensory system doesn't register enough)

May not engage – miss cues

Should seek calm and alert state, but do not

May self-script for stimulation and block out entire world

Compliant but not learning

Low tone

Overly tired/apathetic

Wander aimlessly

Struggle to receive enough feedback from their environment

May pursue seemingly purposeless activities (e.g. flapping, spinning, bouncing)

Overly emotional

Constant questions

Difficulty with transitions

Sensory seeker

(sensory system craves more input)

Constant attempt to obtain input to increase arousal

Increase stimulation until they get too much, then crash

After stimulus stops, they are non-responsive

Disorganised

Don't notice if dirty or hurt

Like messy work

Active/fidgety

Can't sit still

Impulsive

Activity may not seem purposeful

Sustained slow motor control is difficult

Excitable

May handle everything

Clumsy

Slow to learn new motor tasks

May not notice when drops things

Examples

Sense	Over responsive	Under responsive
Auditory	Hand dryer, buzzing of appliances	Not hear name/instructions
Visual	Eye contact, busy room	Stare at bright lights
Smell	Meals cooking	Sniff hair, like the smell of bleach
Taste	Limited diet	Like strong or mixed flavours
Touch	Elements of clothes, wearing socks/shoes	Not feel pain, chew non-edible things for texture
Proprioception/ vestibular	Proximity of peers	Lean on people, furniture, be in constant motion
Interoception	Focus on bodily functions	Not know when hungry, full, need the toilet, tiredness, temperature, unaware of pain

3 GOLDEN RULES

Is it doing the
child harm?

Is it doing
someone else
harm?

Could it do
harm in 10
years time?

If the answer is no, you do not need to intervene

Pro-active not reactive



Sensory regulation is **a need**



Observable behaviours are strategies to self-regulate and meet underlying needs



Where a child is meeting their own needs inappropriately or unsafely, we can provide an appropriate alternative



Replacement strategies can't be used as a reward for having completed a task, they need to be happen first, to help the child to be ready to learn



Impact of sensory input

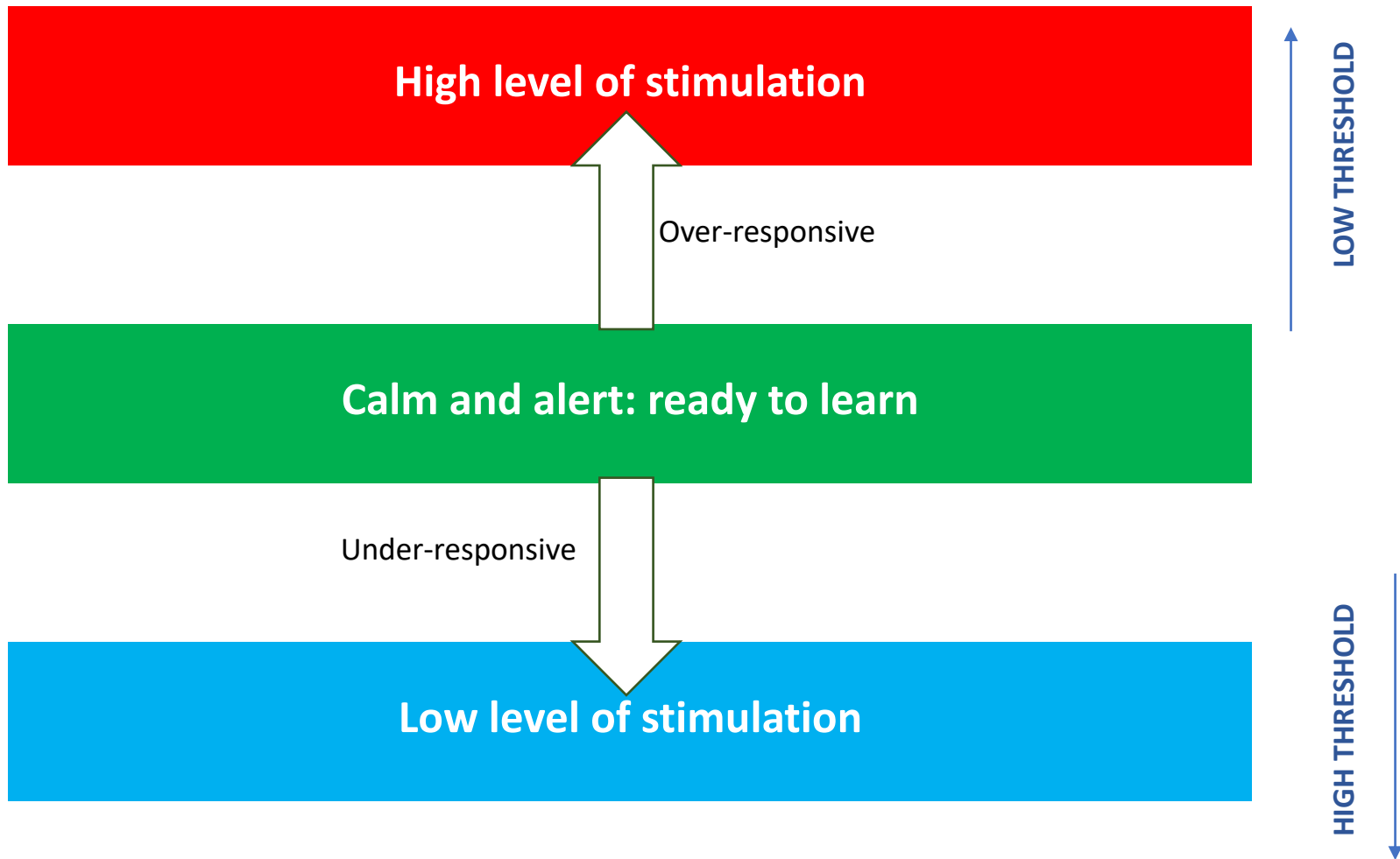
- Proprioception (body awareness) activities can have an impact on body for 2 hours.
- Vestibular (balance) activities can have an impact on body for 4-8 hours.
- Linear vestibular (up and down/horizontal) is **organising**
- Rotary vestibular (spinning) is **stimulating**



Intervention

	ADULTS	ENVIRONMENT	ACTIVITY
UNDER RESPONSIVE	Loud voice, animated style, change inflection, high energy	Bright lights and colours High energy Music	Fast linear vestibular (trampoline) Fast regular movements with starts and stops (swing) Deep touch proprioception (squeeze, pressure, weighted blanket)
OVER RESPONSIVE	Low, slow voice Regular predictable rhythm Minimize gestures and movement	Clutter and distraction free Dull, muted colours Quiet, noise free or calming music Stress-free environment Schedules	Slow repetitive activity that is organising eg pacing Heavy muscle work- deep touch and heavy proprioception (carrying shopping, lifting weights)
SENSORY SEEKER	Low, slow voice Regular predictable rhythm Minimize gestures and movement	Clutter and distraction free Dull, muted colours Quiet, noise free or calming music Stress-free environment Schedules	Active proprioception Deep touch pressure Linear vestibular Slow repetitive activities

Calm and Alert





Achieving a calm alert state: strategies

- provide a range of sensory accessories – help child find their preference
- say name before giving instructions
- use technology to record at school
- provide written/pictorial instructions or routines
- provide a space with reduced distractions
- provide proactive sensory input throughout day (before child becomes overwhelmed)
- allow to eat away from others
- turn off lights/electricals, unless in use
- sensory regulation needs a 24-hour approach



Achieving a calm alert state: resources

- Seating options – eg beanbag, ball, wobble cushion, egg chair
- headphones
- coloured paper for writing instead of white
- traffic light card to request time out
- fiddle toys
- ‘chewellery’ – chewable jewellery
- weighted blanket/cushion
- wearing cap/hood up/sunglasses indoors
- headphones to listen to music
- apps (eg headspace)



Achieving a calm alert state: environment changes

- avoiding wearing perfume/strong smelling toiletries
- consider decor
- location of chargers/electronics
- consider furniture placement – think before you rearrange!
- everyday objects allowed to be used as fiddle toys
- reduce visual clutter

Somatosensory

Tactile and proprioception are merged (neurologically and developmentally)

Handstands against the wall

Foot fidgets

Chin tuck, downward gaze

Hold heavy ball above head in full extension

Fidget toys

CALM DOWN TOOLS FOR OLDER KIDS

www.andnextcomesL.com

Items that give kids a brain break

- Puzzles
- Chapter books to read
- Blank notebook/journal and writing utensils
- Coloring books
- Scratch art doodle pad
- Activity books
- Brain Quest cards
- Doodle books
- Mad Libs
- One player travel sized games

Items for auditory sensory support

- Noise cancelling headphones
- MP3 player with music, nature sounds, audiobooks, etc.
- Sound machine

Items for oral motor sensory support

- Chewing gum, hard candies, or lollipops
- Snacks with a variety of textures
- Chew necklace

Items to support breathing & relaxation

- Book of yoga poses or yoga activity cards
- Rescue Remedy Spray

Items that provide proprioceptive support

- Punching bag or bop bag
- Mini massager
- Weighted lap cushion
- Hand weights
- Resistance/exercise bands
- Compression clothing
- Heated blanket
- Weighted blanket
- Skipping rope

Items to squeeze, fidget with, or keep hands busy

- LEGO kits
- Stress balls
- Rubik's Cube
- Wooden or metal logic puzzles
- Craft kits
- Cat's cradle

Items to visually calm

- Kaleidoscope
- Eye mask
- Look & find books
- Lava lamp

Items for olfactory sensory support

- Calming essential oil spray
- Scented lotion



Key Points

- **Screening** the environment can take time
- Play **detective**
- Be prepared and plan for **different** reactions – under or over
- Allow child longer to **process** stimulus where necessary
- Allow **time out** to help child regulate
- **Replace** the behaviour with something more appropriate
- **Help** child to develop strategies, these are skills for life
- Behavioural change may need to be achieved in **stages**
- Consider **systemic** causes (allergy, illness, seizure activity, pain)



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