

Health Issues Affecting Families Today

With Cara of Health Home and Happiness



Sensory Solutions – Notes Page

Cara – Health Home and Happiness – 6 years of occupational therapy experience with her daughter, has learned from observing many other families as well.

Teresa, mom of 11- new to learning about sensory issues. Children come from varied backgrounds, some learning disabilities, babies born to a meth-addicted mom.

- Korean diet – kimchi, broth at every meal.
1. Observe, try things, observe some more.
 - a. It's hard, but really rewarding because we see so much progress
 - b. First 5 children were adopted as infants, her last 6 were adopted later, so they've had the experience of helping children with harder starts.
 - c. Educated how much nutrition, supplements play into this.
 - d. We'll cover GAPS diet and supplements in other webinars.
 2. Preschool teachers are seeing many more
 3. Sensory avoidant vs sensory seeking
 - a. Children can present with both

*This is the notes page from the Simple Sensory Solutions Webinar by Health, Home, and Happiness
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- b. Many people are only familiar with one kind (socks have to be on a certain way)
 - c. Melting down all the time – the visual stimulation of errands was too much
 - i. Ergo baby carrier gives sensory tactile input
 - ii. Do you never take your child out in public? Why is she reacting like this?
 - iii. There is no amount of dici
 - d. There is no amount of discipline that will correct a sensory issue, it's something that you need to help the child regulate.
4. Visually Avoidant Behaviors
- i. Shield eyes
 - ii. Look away from contrast
 - iii. Doesn't like bright stores
 - iv. Doesn't like visual chaos (carnivals, Disneyland)
 - v. Avoid TV. Hannah didn't watch TV until she was about 6. Caused visual overstimulation.
5. Auditory avoidant behaviors:
- a. Dislike loud noises: ticking, squeaking, vacuum (going nuts over the little squeak in the car)
 - b. When sensory issues become a problem is when it starts making a major or consistent impact on our life – going out of our way to avoid using or hearing them and it makes a big difference in life quality. Working to help regulate improves quality of life.
 - c. Prefers silence
6. Tactile avoidant behavior
- a. The famous 'seams of the socks' – the socks have to have the seams lined up along toes, or inside out socks
 - b. Elastic-waisted pants preferred
 - c. Doesn't like the feel of sand, water, wind – sensory avoidant children don't like the beach often
 - d. Prefers soft food
 - e. Dislike chips, cookies, carrot sticks (crunchy)
7. Visually Sensory Seeking
- a. Flicking lights off and on

- i. If it happens over and over again, their ‘boredom thing of choice’
 - ii. We’ll talk later about their sensory diet
 - b. Might want to color everywhere, want posters on the wall, may paint all over bedroom wall
 - c. Love stores like Target, Walmart, the mall
 - d. Enjoy patterns and contrast
- 8. Auditory sensory seeking
 - a. Hannah is an auditory sensory seeker – loves the race track, shooting range (outdoor), loud music with lots of bass
 - b. Verbal stims
 - c. Talk ‘too loud’
 - d. Crash things down just to hear them
 - e. Want to listen to TV or radio too loud
- 9. Tactile seeking
 - a. Tight hugs
 - b. Weighted blankets, many blankets
 - c. Tight clothing, prefers to wear stiff jeans to leggings
 - d. Smearing lotion, makeup, soap – this might be their preferred ‘naughty’ behavior
 - e. Detergent container
 - f. Sand box
 - g. Gravitate to playing too rough
 - h. Run or jump inappropriately – looking for sensory input
- 10. Examples from Teresa
 - a. 14-year-old makes constant repetitive drumming – mom might have avoidant thing going on and just wants quiet. Boy does beat boxing thing with his lips over and over – might be a sensory issue. Would love drum set.
 - b. 6-year-old might tend toward sensory tactile seeking – but in part it’s just 6-year-old boy who tends toward being loud, running, etc.
 - c. If they have plenty of outside time, might need more input to feel regulated.
 - d. 3 huggers – understanding that it might be a sensory issue helps parents to be understanding. Providing tactile input early in the day might help prevent mom from being ‘touched out’.

11. Our bodies need a certain amount of input and rest of sensations
 - a. Tactile input - a few hugs, walking on the ground
 - b. Auditory – talking and listening to general directions and general media
 - i. Having periods of silence fulfills the avoidant needs
 - c. Typically developing people feel sensory nourished
 - i. Kids with sensory issues aren't getting the sensory that they crave
 - ii. Nobody wants sandpaper on their skin – these kids have hypersensitivity and that's what it feels like
 - iii. Reduced sensitivity – they need more because they don't get the input needed
12. Sensory diet – nobody would live without fat or protein and just on starch – you wouldn't feel nourished – nobody would expect someone to feel good with this minimal nutrition. It's the same way with sensory needs.
13. Go over the checklist and see where your family falls in all these categories – whether they are seeking, avoidant, neutral in each category
 - a. Hannah: Visually avoidant, auditory seeking, tactile neutral to seeking

14. Come up with appropriate activities to feed their need
 - a. Provide for needs before poor behavior starts
 - b. 'need' can be a break
 - c. 'need' can be to provide sensory input
15. Sensory diet – this helps them their brains to learn to process sensory information
 - a. Expose to many sensations - as tolerated. Anything new is helping to build new pathways in the brain
 - i. Sand paper
 - ii. Sand
 - iii. Water
 - iv. Soap bubbles

- v. Weighted activities (fill milk cartons with water and allow them to load into a wagon and pull around)
 - vi. Allow them to take the books off the book shelf as toddlers
 - vii. Listen to loud vs soft music
 - viii. Make it all a game. Look for ideas in parenting magazines with a focus on different sensory input rather than 'learning' – it's just a different kind of learning.
 - ix. Running cars under water in the bath
 - x. Playing with finger paint
 - xi. Writing with cheap lipstick on sidewalk, sidewalk chalk
16. Don't ever treat this like a discipline issue
- a. We don't force exposure, we gently lead up to it to prevent stress
 - b. Get them used to touching different sensations to help their brain to start making pathways so they recognize that different is not necessary bad
17. A varied sensory diet is important
18. Visually avoidant children:
- a. Keep lights low in the home
 - b. Provide sunglasses for wear as often, possibly suggest
 - c. Avoid big box store as much as possible – don't do a bunch of errands at once with child.
 - d. Visually minimal room – get rid of chaos, possibly keep toys in the closet.
 - i. No wall decals, neutrally painted
 - ii. Soft lighting
19. Visually seeking
- a. Checkerboard wall, posters
 - b. Enjoy trips to big box stores (Costco, Walmart, Petsmart)
 - c. Allow TV to be on for background visual stimulation
20. Auditory avoidant:
- a. Ear protection (found in shooting department)
 - b. Allow them to wear a beanie over their ears (this can be less attention calling than ear protection)

- c. Turning off radio in the car, asking everyone to use headphones
 - d. Warn this child before turning on appliances so they have the ability to go to another room
21. Auditory seeking children
- a. Allow to listen to music in headphones
 - b. Cap guns
 - c. White noise in bedroom, low radio or white noise machines
 - d. Dance party with loud music
22. Tactile avoidant children
- a. Light clothing
 - b. Keeping room warm
 - c. Avoiding wind, keeping windows rolled up in car
 - d. Keep shoes and socks on
 - e. Purchase clothing without tags
 - f. Clothing with seams serged flat (Hanna Andersson clothes)
 - g. Elastic waisted pants
23. Tactile seeking children
- a. Swing high
 - b. Wrap like a burrito
 - c. Roller coaster
 - d. Dry brushing (boar hair brush brush firm strokes) – part of morning routine
 - e. Joint compression (get help with this from an OT)
 - f. Tight hugging
24. Meltdown indicators
- a. Swinging from high to low
 - b. Sudden freezing or ‘spacing out’
25. Is this a nutrient deficiency ?
- a. We’ll go more into this in the GAPS/Gut flora webinar
 - b. 2 hemispheres of the brain may not be connecting well – midline defect, which may be a nutrient deficiency

- c. Sensory dysfunction is a neurological issues, a dysregulation of the brain
 - d. Gut-brain connection
 - e. Nutrition causes brain issues, which causes sensory issues
 - f. Supplementation and dietary intervention can help these kids
26. Signs of sensory dysregulation
- a. Constant meltdowns
 - b. Extreme highs and lows during play – not necessarily drama, but lots of going from calmly to being overstimulated this can be a sign of sensory dysregulation
 - c. Refusal to try new things – this can cause from their brain interpreting things as being too harsh
27. Explaining to others
- a. “It’s a sensory issue” – key words
 - b. Discipline won’t help – remove from environment ASAP
 - c. If people say it looks like a discipline issue, remember that you are the parent, you know their limits
 - d. It’s like hearing nails on the chalkboard over and over and over again – nobody can behave how they ‘should’ behave if that’s what it’s like in their brain.
 - e. It’s not anyone’s fault, but the child won’t have
 - f. Provide books for grandparents, care providers, etc
 - i. This can be ‘required reading’ for babysitters or anyone that interacts with my child.
 - ii. Typical discipline doesn’t work with these kids if they’re overstimulated.
 - 1. Books:
 - 2. Building Bridges Through Sensory Integration
 - 3. Sensational Kids
 - 4. The Out of Sync Child