

Simple Solutions to Sensory Processing Issues

Oh, so THAT'S WHY they're melting down...

Introductions

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It's a sensory issue

Sensory avoidant vs Sensory Seeking

- Can have both in the same child
- Many people are only familiar with one kind - ie the seams of socks (sensory avoidant)

Sensory Avoidant Behaviors

Visual: Shielding eyes, looking away from contrast (written words), hates bright stores, visual chaos (big box stores, carnivals, Disneyland)

Sensory Avoidant Behaviors

Auditory: Dislikes loud noises, hates the vacuum, cannot stand ticking or squeaking in an appliance (this is fairly common), prefers silence

Sensory Avoidant Behaviors

Tactile: The famous “seams of the socks”

Only will wear elastic waisted pants

Will not touch grass with bare feet

Dislikes the feel of water, sand, wind

Only eats smooth or soft foods

Dislikes chips, cookies, carrot sticks

Sensory Seeking Behaviors

Visual:

Flicking lights off and on

Wanting color everywhere

Loving Target, Walmart, etc - bright lights

Loves flashlights

Enjoys patterns and contrast

Sensory Seeking Behaviors

Auditory:

Verbal stims

Listening to the same thing over and over

Talking too loud

Crashing things down

Listening to the TV 'too loud'

Sensory Seeking Behaviors

Tactile:

Loves tight hugs

Weighted blankets, many blankets

Tight clothing

Will only wear jeans

Smears lotion, makeup, soap

Digs in detergent container, sand box, dirt

Plays 'too rough'

Jumps, runs inappropriately

Solutions

1. Identify if your child (or yourself) is seeking/avoidant/neutural in each category
 - a. Visual
 - b. Auditory
 - c. Tactile

Solutions

2. Using the lists from the avoidant/seeking behaviors, come up with appropriate activities that you can work into their day that 'feed their need'

Aim to give them what they need BEFORE they start to melt down

Solutions: A Sensory Diet

Exposure to both desired and undesired sensations helps the brain practice dealing with sensory input, and provides the sensory activities that kids crave.

Don't focus on making kids do what they don't want to do, but rather incorporate different textures, pressures, noise levels, and visual stimulation **as tolerated**.

A varied sensory diet is important for these kids to develop and learn to regulate.

Solutions: Appropriate Activities

Examples:

Visually avoidant - keep lights low at home, provide sunglasses for wearing as often as she wants, avoid 'big box' stores, organize and paint room so it is visually minimal

Visually seeking - Sharp contrast patterns on walls in room (posters could work), trips to big box stores to help regulate, allow TV to be on but muted for background visual stimulation

Solutions: Appropriate Activities

Examples:

Auditory Avoidant: Provide ear protection (like is used for shooting), or allow to wear a beanie over her ears. Turn off radio (other people can use headphones) and other unneeded background noise. Warn before turning on appliances.

Auditory seeking: Allow to listen to headphones, cap guns, white noise in bedroom at night, (if also sensory seeking) loud music and dancing

Solutions: Appropriate Activities

Examples:

Sensory Avoidant: Light clothing, avoid wind, keep room warm so they don't need blankets to sleep, keep shoes and socks on rather than barefoot, clothing without tags, clothing with seams serged flat, soft clothes

Sensory Seeking: Swinging high, wrapping like a burrito in a blanket, dry brushing, being tightly hugged for a long time, joint compression (link in notes)

Signs of Sensory Dysregulation

- Melting down
- Extreme highs and lows during play
 - Refusal to try new things

Explaining to others

“It’s a sensory issue”

She’s having a hard time regulating here, discipline won’t help, we need to change her environment.

Provide books for grandparents and care providers on Sensory Processing Disorder/ Sensory Integration Dysfunction

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