

Meeting Your Child's Sensory Needs – Transcript



In this final video of our miniseries, we are going to talk to you about staying in the “Just right” Winnie the Pooh zone and meeting your child's day to day sensory needs.

It is important that children are in a calm well-regulated state so that they can attend to and engage in their daily activities. Some children need more or less feedback than others to keep them calm and alert during the day. As we spoke about in our third video this is called modulation. The kind of feedback needed within each sensory system will be different for each child. It is important to provide a daily plan of strategies and activities that provide the regular feedback that your child needs to allow them to stay calm, alert and engaged in their daily routine. We often refer to this as a sensory lifestyle or sensory diet.

Here are some things to think about when creating a sensory lifestyle for your child.

Consider what zone your child is most often in. After watching our previous videos, you're likely to have associated your child as more of a Tigger or Eeyore. Depending on what zone you feel most reflects your child, make sure you are providing lots of opportunities for the sensory feedback we have suggested on each video.

Think about how your child moves into different zones at specific times of the day. We commonly see children returning from school in the Tigger zone after having contained their alertness throughout the whole day or if the environment at home is particularly overwhelming. Use the strategies that we have provided in the previous videos incorporating them in your child's daily routine to ensure they get the feedback they need. If you notice your child's

level of alertness changing, consider introducing a new strategy to help them stay regulated.

Keep in mind that it is easier to keep your child in the Winnie the Pooh zone than try to get them out of the Tigger zone. Make sure they use the strategies every day even if they appear to be regulated.

You can consider teaching your child about their own sensory needs and level of alertness to help them develop their own independence in self-regulation.

Remember! As individuals we each have our own sensory preferences and tolerances and our responses can change depending on our energy levels, mood, blood sugar levels and other factors in the environment.

Children will move between each zone at various points throughout the day, however we want to try and keep them in the 'Winnie' zone as often as possible so that they are able to remain focused on their activities and learn new skills.

So, by thinking and planning positive sensory experiences we can help manage situations which some individuals find over or underwhelming. Avoiding a dislike or upsetting sensory experience may help an individual calm down or be able to take part in an activity.

It's important to recognise that how we interpret sensory information impacts on how we feel, think, behave and respond.

We like Lucy Jane Miller's "use a secret". This is a problem-solving tool that you can use to help you and older children think through 7 elements of a challenging situation and provides a format for how to think about manipulating these elements to improve the situation. Ask yourself: -

A can I draw the child's attention away from his anxiety?

S is there a sensation alarming my child right now?

E what emotion is my child experiencing and what works best when he feels this way?

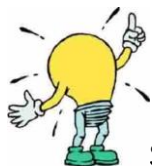
C what part of our culture can be changed to avoid the situation eg avoid taking him to the supermarket

R is there something in his relationship with me or someone else right now causing him to act in this way

E what in the environment is upsetting my child. How can we change it?

T what is upsetting my child about the task in hand and can we modify or substitute the task.

It is important to remember that there may be 2,3, or more of these elements that will be impacting on the child, and which could be modified to find the best solution to each challenging situation.



So, meeting your child's sensory needs, here are our top tips.

Seek to understand your child's sensory needs and preferences.

Provide predictability. If your child knows what's going to happen, you are less likely to have meltdowns.

Provide an environment that you know works best for them.

Provide a safe space for them to go when things become overwhelming such as a sensory retreat, we mentioned in our Tigger Zone video.

And finally, plan for movement breaks. Our children who are very fidgety or always on the go need to have regular movement breaks.

For further ideas please see our video series on meeting you child's sensory needs where we offer practical advice and specific strategies to support your child's day to day activities such as dressing, bathing, tooth brushing and eating.

Thank you for watching our miniseries on sensory integration. Here are our contact details. Prior to contacting the service, we suggest you explore our resources online and on our Facebook page. We have resources on our webpage you can explore which will help you identify strategies for your child. Please use the link in the box below to take you to our webpage. Advice and support can be sought from the service by contacting the team directly using our enquiry line or via our enquiry email inbox.



How To Contact Us...

Prior to contacting the service, we suggest you explore our resources online and on Facebook;



www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/cypot



@CYPOTNHSBorders
www.facebook.com/CYPOTNHSBorders

Advice and support can be sought from the service by contacting the team directly using our Enquiry Line or via our Enquiry Email Inbox.



01896 826033 (voicemail)



Paediatric.OTEnquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk

We will aim to contact you within 5 working days to discuss your enquiry