

Transcript



Welcome to our video in our mini-series Meeting your Child's Sensory Needs. In this video we shall look at some of the sensory behaviour your child may be displaying when dressing and provide strategies for you to try, helping you to meet their needs.

Dressing

As explained in our video series on sensory integration, too much sensory feedback impacts on how your child feels, thinks, behaves, and responds. This feedback may make dressing difficult for your child.

You may have noticed that they dislikes wearing certain clothes or avoid getting dressed. They may complain their new school shoes don't feel right even though you know they fit properly. They may fidget constantly with their clothing or scratch where labels lie against their skin.

Fabrics have a wide variety of textures such as soft, rough, warm, fluffy and have noises and smells too. Cuffs and hems can feel different as the fabric will be thicker, as can fastenings with some trousers and skirts having buttons or metal hooks and eyes on the inside waistband.

Their clothing or shoes could be providing too much sensory feedback that moves them from the "Just Right" zone. Our skin, especially our head, neck and abdominal areas, are particularly sensitive, so clothing provides constant sensory feedback.



Getting dressed or undressed uses complex motor skills, so becoming independent needs lots of practice of tasks from pulling on tee shirts, jumpers and socks to fastening zips and buttons. The movements involved can also impact on their vestibular system, making them feel unsteady.

Meeting sensory needs

It's important to try to work out how you can help to reduce/replace this feedback with a more positive sensory experience. Remember we all have different sensory likes and dislikes and your child will likely have different preferences to you and their siblings. You know your child best and will already know a lot about what they like and dislike so you can use this as you work with your child to try out different strategies.

Don't expect big changes overnight. It can take several months for sensory strategies to be used effectively. You will likely need to use the strategies you think work best, for you and your child, consistently for around 3 months before knowing for certain that they work. Be prepared for them not to work each and every time so have a few sensory strategies that can be used in these situations.

Use a Secret (Lucy Jane Miller 2006)

We introduced "A SECRET" by Lucy Jane Miller in our video "meeting your child's needs". This is a problem-solving tool for parents, teenagers and even for children themselves to think about the seven elements in sensory and motor challenges and to come up with some ideas of things to change, that will lead to smoother functioning for the child. "A SECRET" is an acronym for these seven elements: attention, sensation, emotional regulation, culture, relationship, environment and task. "A SECRET" is not a rigid formula for what to do, but a flexible format helping you to consider each of these important elements in turn.

The sensation element is only one part of "A SECRET". Think about how each of these elements could be influencing the behaviour and how, or if, these could be manipulated to allow your child to function smoothly. For example, could you change the environment by reducing distractions, playing their calming playlist or practicing the individual tasks such as fastenings in a play situation?

Now let's think about S(sensation)

The first step when considering the sensation element, is to closely observe your child's reactions and ask yourself which sensory system is being over stimulated? Investigate by thinking of one sensory system at a time. We will look at each system and give you some questions to ask yourself with practical strategies for things to try.



We will consider Touch first. Ask yourself these questions for each item of clothing.

- How does the fabric feel against their skin?
- Is there an elastic waistband or buttons? Look for internal fastening which may be causing irritation.
- Are there seams on the clothing?
- Is the material heavy or light?
- Is the clothing or footwear tight or loose?
- Do they appear to dislike pulling things over their head or face?
- Are labels causing irritation?



Look for consistencies in their sensory response as this will allow you to manipulate the sensation element that is potentially causing distress or alarm. Try these strategies for the touch sensory system, or experiment with your own.



- Avoid buying clothes your child perceives as irritating. For example, they may refuse to wear a hoodie that need to go over their heads as they don't like the sensation of the fabric covering their face when pulling in on but may like the zipped ones. If they dislike heavy jackets, add layers of clothes instead such as vests, tee-shirts and jumpers.
- Try comfortable clothing made from different materials and think about the length of the sleeves e.g., heavy coats or soft and fluffy hoodies. This can help you understand which fabrics and styles of clothes that they feel comfortable wearing.
- Wash new clothes several times to get rid of any stiffness.
- Turn socks and tights inside out to prevent seams rubbing against toes.
- You can iron seams flat or buy seamless/seam free clothing.
- Remove labels until your child can tolerate them or buy clothing that is label free. Some retailers place labels in pockets or print them instead.
- Try compression clothing under garments if they enjoy deep pressure. This can help some children feel calm and they can then tolerate everyday clothes on top of the compression clothes.
- If they like shoes that are too tight, try compression socks to give them the sensory feedback they need. This may allow them to then wear shoes that fit correctly.
- If they prefer to wear minimal or no clothing, try light floaty fabrics as they may be able to tolerate these.



The NSPCC provides help for parents on how to talk to your child about pants. We have put a link to their webpage in the video description box

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below. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/pants-underwear-rule/>



Think about

- Do the clothes have a smell?
- or do they smell differently? Some fabrics retain smells and can pick up odours that may over stimulate their smell sense. Others may smell different when wet.
- Have you changed your detergent or fabric softener?

Some strategies

- Try washing clothes with an unscented fabric detergent and softener. Be consistent so the smell of their clothes doesn't change.
- Be aware of the environment where the clothes are dried. Kitchen smells can be easily absorbed into fabrics.
- Wash new clothes to get rid of any new fabric smells. This also makes them smell familiar.



We may not often consider clothes to be noisy, but here are some things to consider.

- Does the fabric rustle or have a noise? Waterproof clothing in particular can be noisy when walking or running.
- Do the shoes / trainers squeak or make a different noise?
- Does your child refuse to wear a hat or put their hood up even when its cold or raining?
- Have them help choose new clothes and shoes and try them on before you buy to check for annoying noises. Move around in them to make sure.
- Covering ears with hats and hoods alters sounds. If they dislike their ears covered, try caps which don't fully cover their ears. Or if they like them covered, you may wish to consider their sensitivity to noise.



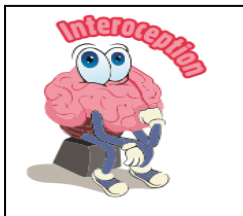


For vision think about

- How do the clothes look? What colour are they? Is there a pattern?
- Did they help choose them themselves?
- Is the TV on or are there toys lying around where they are dressing?

Try these strategies to see if they help.

- Have them help choose their outfit for the day. They could set it out the night before and place it in the order it goes on so that it's easier for them to get dressed.
- They may like or dislike certain colours and patterns. Most of us have favourite colours and styles of clothes that we prefer to wear. Choose clothes with pictures of their favourite characters as this may encourage them to wear it.
- Take them shopping to help choose their clothes.
- Try to minimise any visual distractions. Consider the environment they use, perhaps another area would be less distracting or try to switch off or remove the distraction.



Interoception is our internal body sense so for example will let us know when we are too hot, too cold and feel just right. So think about if you have noticed any of these signs.

- Does your child ever recognise if they feel hot or cold or do certain areas of their bodies react differently to hot or cold than you expect? Examples of this may include that you have noticed your child is looking flushed and sweaty but when asked, they say they aren't hot.
- Do they prefer certain clothes that don't match the weather conditions? For example, they insist on wearing shorts in very cold weather.



If so, try to

- Consider they may not recognise the sensory signals that tell them how their body is feeling, or they may not feel the sensation that you do when getting ready to go out so be prepared. For example, during cold weather if they refuse to wear a jacket before going outside, put one in their bag. It may take longer for them to recognise they are cold but once

they do, they may put it on. Discuss with them what body signals to look for that will tell them they are cold.

- You can also have conversations around what makes them feel uncomfortable. Attempt to understand and help them understand their sensory preferences.



For their vestibular sense, look at their balance whilst dressing or putting on their shoes. Clues to look for: -

- Is your child able to balance and feel stable when pulling on or removing clothes or are they fearful of losing their balance?
- Do they dislike their head/face being covered whilst dressing. If their visual is obscured, they may have increased feelings of instability and fear.

You can try to

- Get them to pull on their clothes whilst seated and stand with both feet firmly on the ground when pulling up underwear and trousers.
- When putting on shoes, ensure they are sitting in a position where they can easily reach their feet.
- Give them a feeling of security through your touch. Apply pressure through placing the palms of your hands on their heads and stroking down their hair when sitting or through their shoulders if they enjoy this type of touch.
- If possible, choose clothing that they don't need to pull over their head such as shirts, zipped hoodies and cardigans.



It may take a few attempts before you notice any change. If there is no change, go back and look at the other elements in A SECRET. You may need to try a combination of strategies and elements to help meet your child's needs by reducing/replacing the feedback with a more positive sensory experience.

Weighted and compression clothing.



If your child responds well to the deep pressure calming activities in our Tigger video, they may also find weighted, or compression clothing can help them feel just right throughout the day. There are many options available to purchase from weighted jackets and hoodies, caps, and vests as well as lots of compression clothing options for undergarments.



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Games to support dressing skills

Games are a really good way to support the dressing skills whether it is increasing body awareness or developing fine motor skills that will assist them with putting clothes on. Try to include some of these when exploring their sensory likes and dislikes.



➤ Play dress up. Use a mirror to increase body awareness. You can also try using different materials and fabrics to help explore their sensitivity and what they like/dislike.

➤ Make printed fabrics by using stencils, potato prints, hand or feet prints with finger paints. Use the fabric to make clothes for a doll or teddy.

➤ Ask your child to lie on a large piece of paper such as lining wallpaper, draw an outline of their body. They could then draw on their favourite clothes. Throw beanbags at the outline and name the body parts that the bean bag lands on.



➤ Pretend to go on holiday and pack a bag or case. Let your child select the clothing they would need to take with them. Remember you can choose a sunny or a cold destination.

➤ Play with a dressing doll, teddy or a dressing doll activity book.



➤ Sing action songs: -

- Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes
- Hokey Cokey
- Simon Says
- I'm a Dingle Dangle Scarecrow with a Flippy Floppy Hat (try adding props).



Remember everyone has different sensory responses to stimuli. By thinking of your child's sensory systems and observing how they react to small changes,

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you can gain a better understanding why your child may be feeling, thinking or behaving differently to sensory feedback.

There will likely be times when your strategy doesn't work so have a toolbox full of strategies to dip into as needed.

Give time for strategies to work. Through consistently implementing the strategies they respond well to; you will help them to find a more positive sensory experience and meet their sensory needs.

Thank you for watching. We have hopefully suggested some strategies throughout this video you may wish to try.

We have a pyramid problem solving tool on our website that you can download which may be useful for you. This problem-solving tool helps us to think about the behaviour and the possible underlying sensory causes. By putting the problem at the very top of the triangle then starting to think about each of the sensory systems below, you may be able to identify if there is a sensory reason for the problem. At the bottom of the pyramid, you list the strategies you wish to try.

In this example for toothbrushing, using the problem of tantrums when it's time to brush teeth, we have given examples of the sensory systems that might be receiving too much feedback and strategies you can use to change that, such as trying alternative toothpaste and a vibrating toothbrush.

Once you have tried our suggestions consistently for a while and feel you want to talk through strategies or need support to help implement these, please contact us using our enquiry line or 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



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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.



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