



Children's Therapy

# **Strategies for Teachers: Making you and your classroom more Sensory Friendly**

**Elaine O'Riordan Bsc (Hons)  
Clinical Specialist Occupational Therapist**

[www.leapchildrenstherapy.com](http://www.leapchildrenstherapy.com)







Children's Therapy

"Helping your child *Leap* to their potential"

**For more information,**

*Visit us at:*

Unit 3, Anglo Office Park,  
Lincoln Road, High Wycombe.  
H12 3RH.

[www.leapchildrenstherapy.com](http://www.leapchildrenstherapy.com)

*Email us at:*

[info@leapchildrenstherapy.com](mailto:info@leapchildrenstherapy.com)

*Call us on:*

01494 761 552





## *About Leap...*

- We are a private Occupational Therapy practice with 3 Specialist Occupational Therapists in Buckinghamshire.
- We see children from birth to adulthood with a variety of diagnoses including Autism, Developmental Co-ordination Disorder, Dyspraxia, Sensory Processing Disorder, ADHD and many more.
- We provide a range of services including assessment, individual and group treatment, holiday activities, training, advice and parent support groups.





# Aims of this Session

- To discuss why our senses are important
- To gain an understanding of Sensory Modulation and how this affects the child in the classroom
- To discuss and problem solve practical ways we can you and your classroom more sensory focused
- To have examples of typical sensory presentations
- To take away plenty of practical tips to try.



# Disclaimer

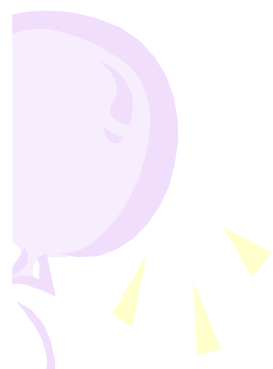
- This workshop is designed to provide up-to-date information and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information.
- However, it is the responsibility of every parent or carer to evaluate the appropriateness of these techniques within the context of their actual setting and to keep up to date with subsequent developments within this area.
- Leap cannot be held responsible for any mal-practice committed by course participants within their home or educational setting.

We are happy to share the knowledge we have gained, based on experience both at work and participation in further training.

The materials presented are the intellectual property of Leap Children's Therapy. Unauthorised reproduction of this information is prohibited. Written permission from the authors would be required for use of this material.



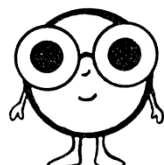
# Why are our senses so important?





# Our 7 Senses

Vision



Hearing



Smell



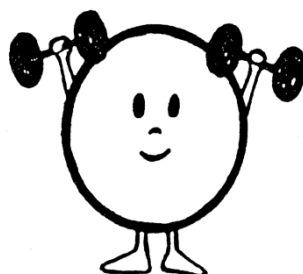
Taste



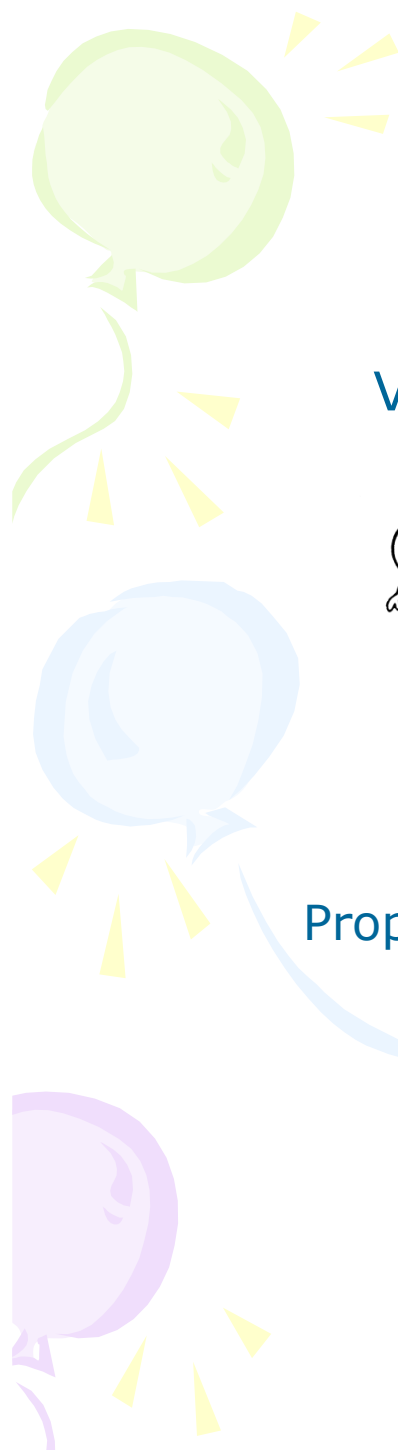
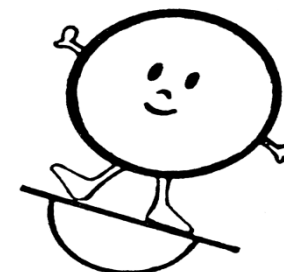
Touch



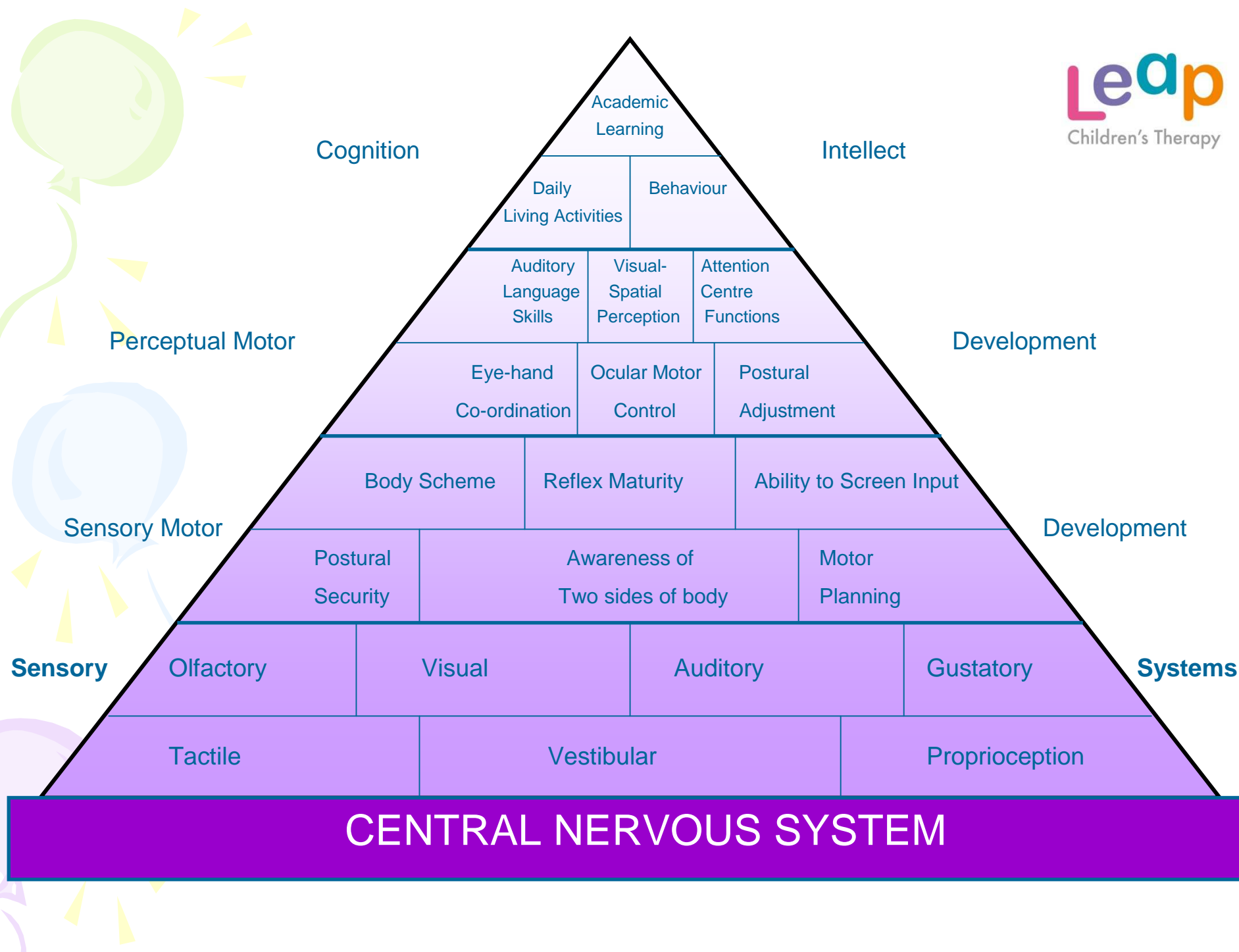
Proprioception



Vestibular









# Sensory Processing



[http://www.paranormalpeopleonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/2008\\_09\\_Synesthesia490X513.jpg](http://www.paranormalpeopleonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/2008_09_Synesthesia490X513.jpg)



Three stylized balloons in green, blue, and purple are positioned on the left side of the slide, each with yellow triangular streamers. The green balloon is at the top, the blue one in the middle, and the purple one at the bottom.

# Sensory Modulation

It is the ability of our central nervous system to adapt, to incoming sensory information from our body and the environment

- It helps us to
  - Take in relevant information
  - Filter out irrelevant information
  - Prioritise our focus
  - Adapt to change in the environment
  - Regulate our arousal levels



# Poor Sensory Modulation



Low Arousal

A **LOT** Feels like  
A **LITTLE**

A **LITTLE** feels like  
A **LOT**

High Arousal



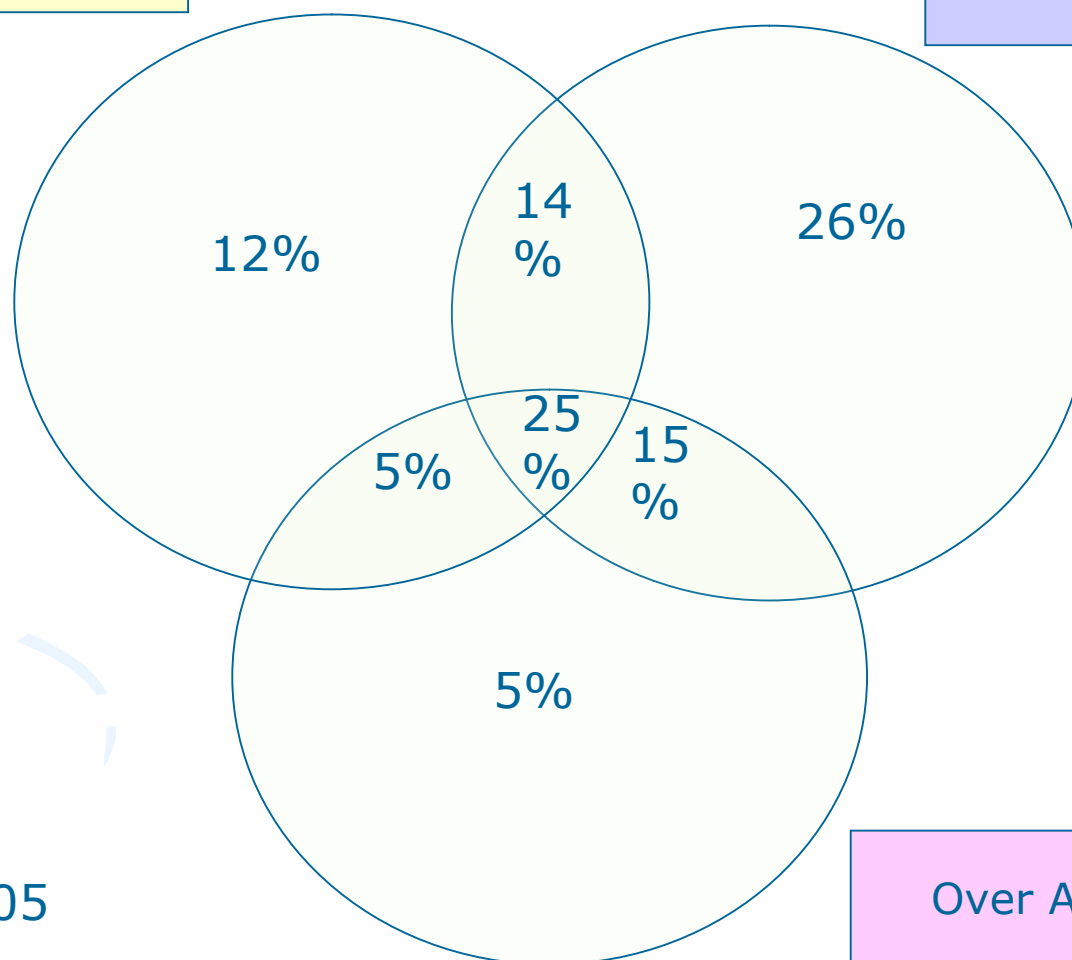
**Our sensory responses are out of  
Balance**



# Modulation Disorders

Low Arousal

Sensory Seeking



Over Aroused

- Miller, 2005



# Low Arousal Child

- Passive child
- Dull affect
- Tires easily
- Difficulty in non interesting tasks e.g. handwriting



- Low sensitivity
- Do not respond to name when called
- Misses cues
- Difficult to engage



# Over- Aroused Child



- Overreact easily
- May be Sensitive to noise, touch, movement
- Difficulty in crowds/ busy
- Difficulty with change and transition

- Easily upset
- Overly sensitive
- Anxious
- Emotionally insecure
- Frequent tantrums
- Avoids activities
- Escape



# Sensory Seeking Child

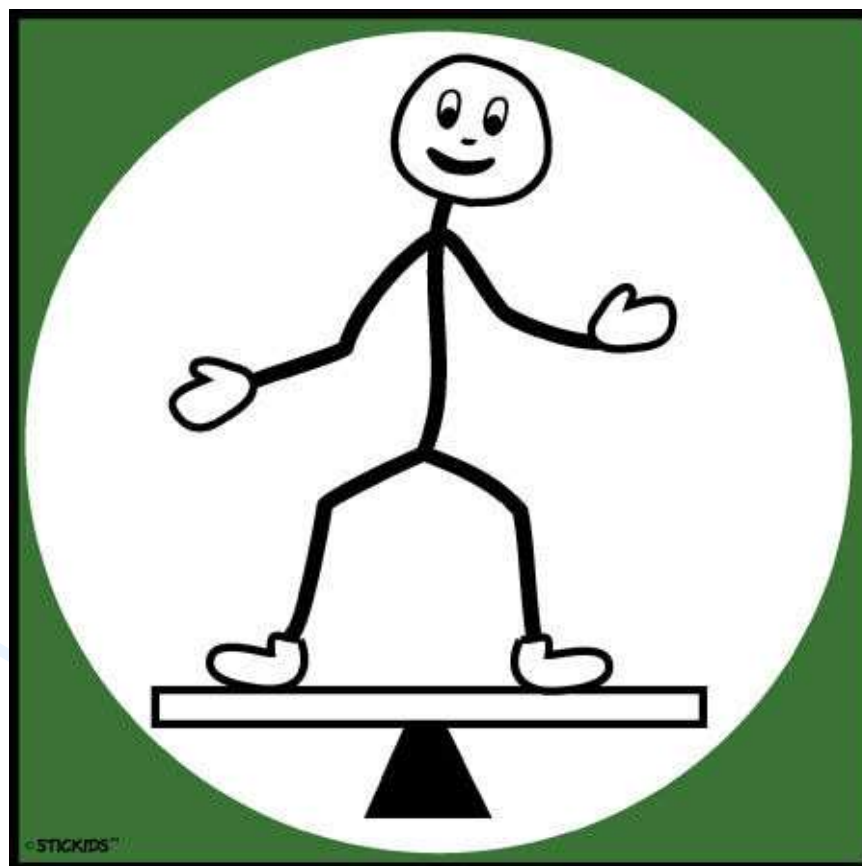


- On the go
- Fidgeting
- Can't sit still
- Seeking all kinds of movement
- Chewing
- Impulsive
- Excitable
- Fast

- May not notice if face or hands are messy
- May be a safety risk
- Clumsy
- Bumps into people
- Uncoordinated



# How to find our Balance?





# You

Tone  
of  
Voice

Actions/  
Moveme  
nts

Proximity/  
eye  
contact

Smells,  
perfume,  
after  
shave

Makeup,  
bright  
lipsticks

Jewellery,  
Dazzling,  
sparkly  
earrings

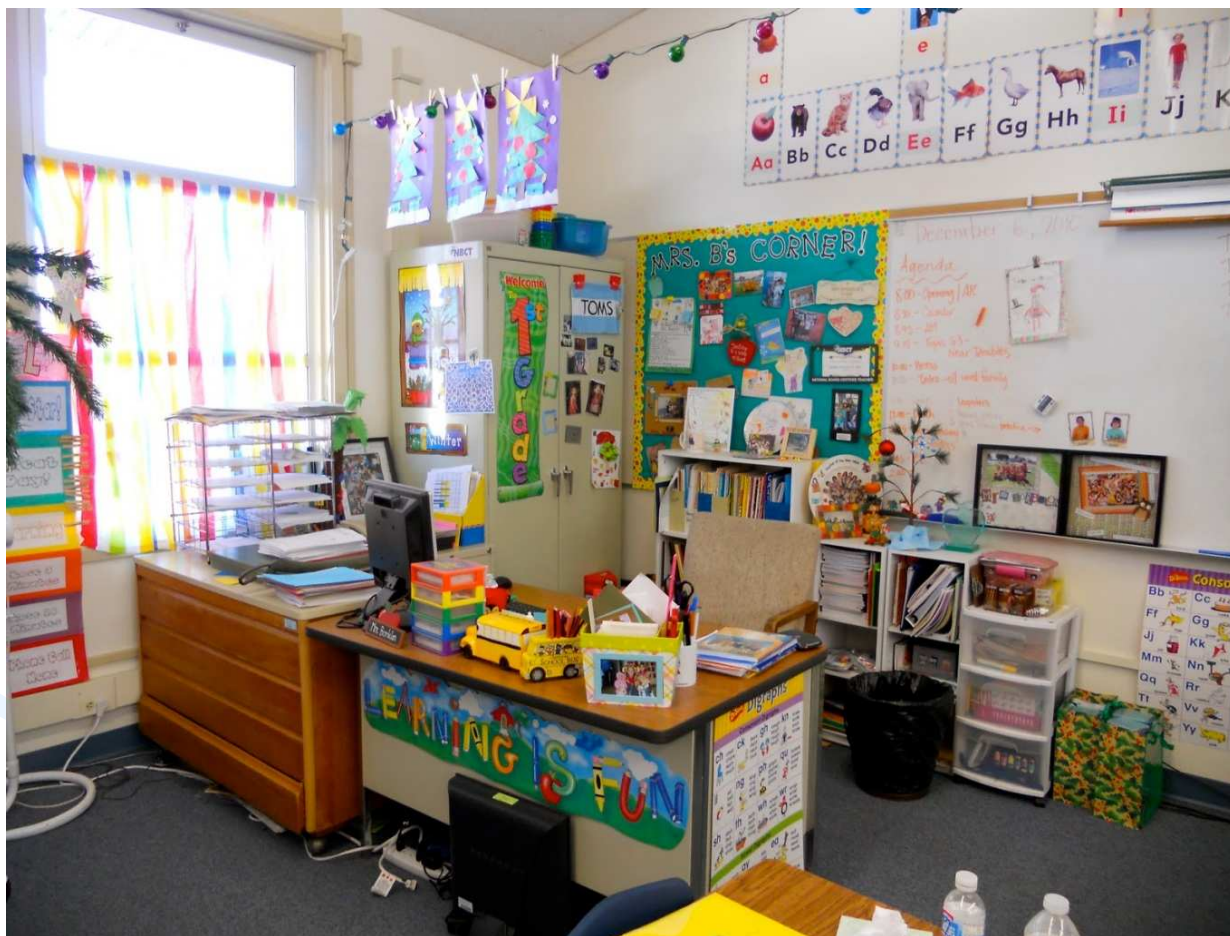
Patterned  
clothes

Texture of  
Clothes





# Environment

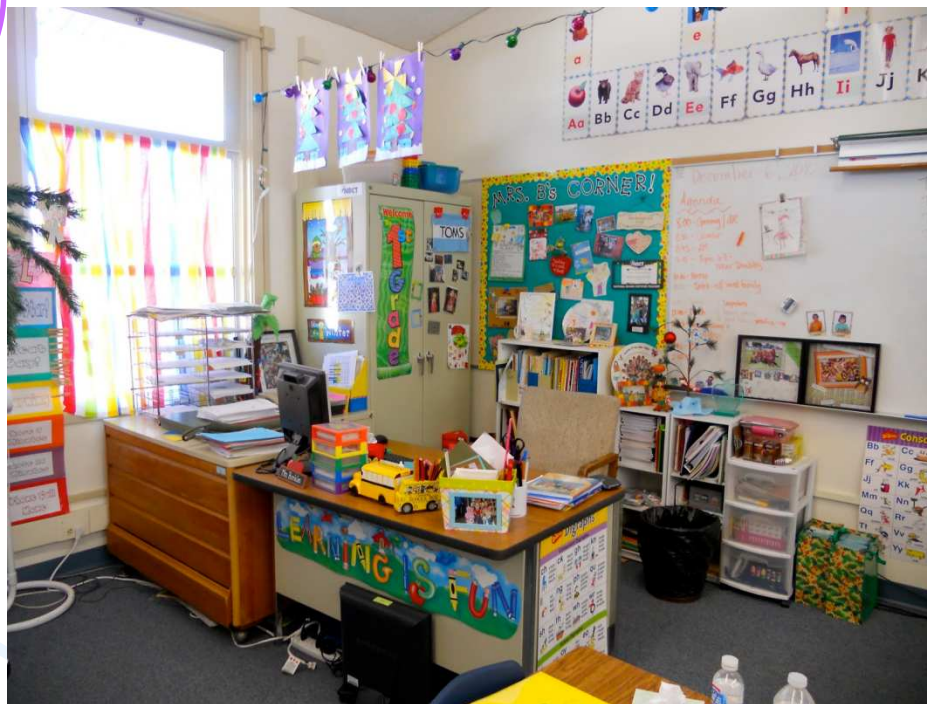




# ***A. Alter***

Visual  
distractions  
/ displays

Noise



Clutter /  
Disorgani  
sation

Any  
Stress

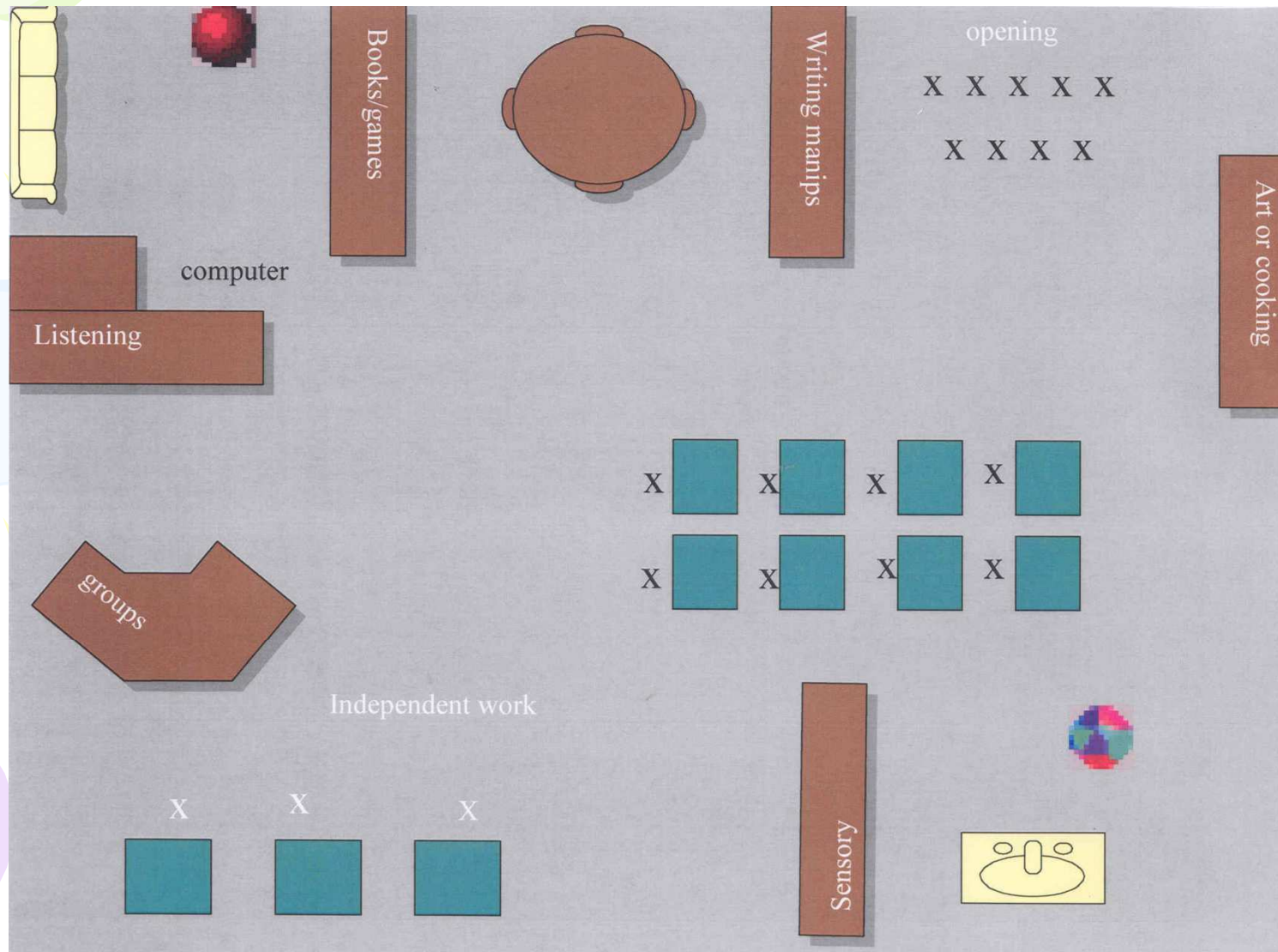


- Create an Organised work space



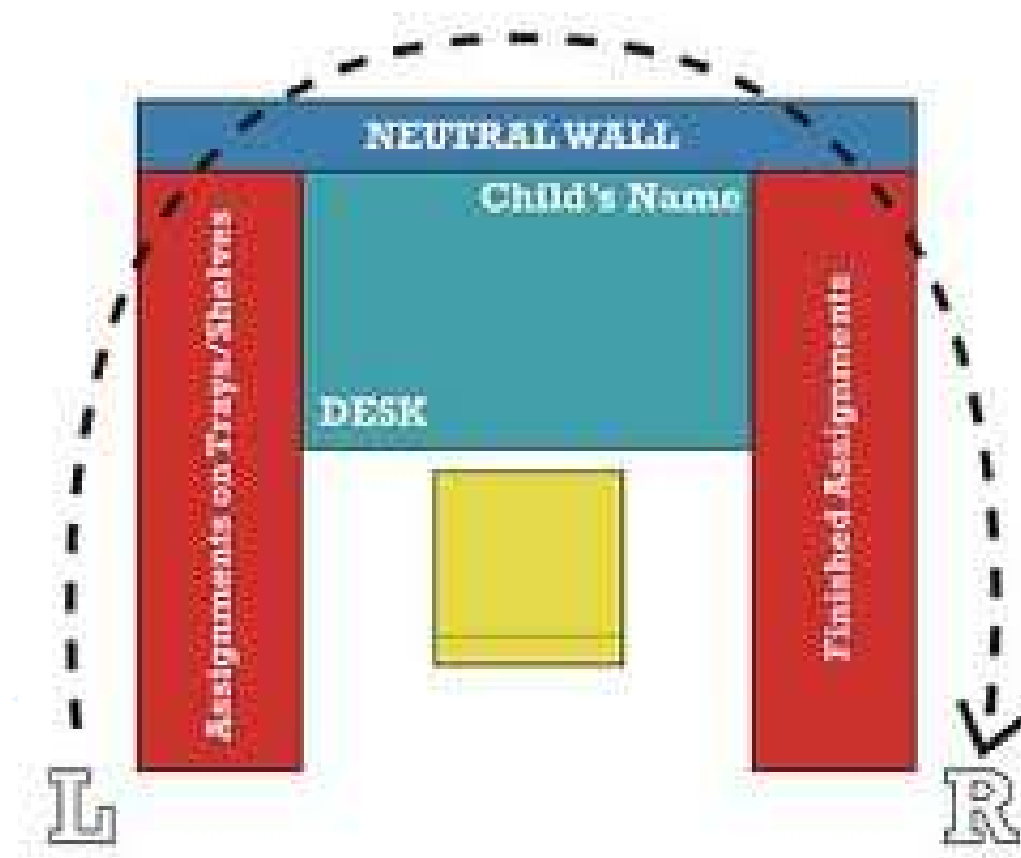


# • Teacch Classroom Layout





- Teacch Workstation





## ***B. Add In***

- Quiet Areas
- Hide Outs





# Visual Timetables and Routines

- Visual Symbols, list of activities





## **A clear start and end to tasks**

- Time timer, sand timer, work trays



Work  
Tray

Finished  
Tray



# Boundaries

- Privacy Boards, Pop up partition





Three balloons in green, blue, and purple are positioned on the left side of the slide, each with yellow triangular streamers. The green balloon is at the top, the blue one in the middle, and the purple one at the bottom.

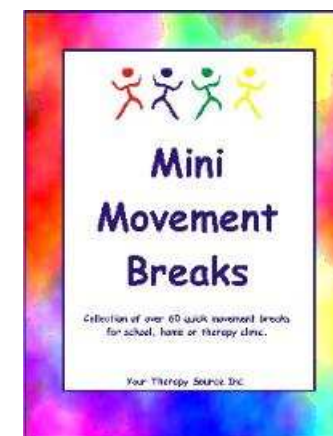
# Sensory Diets

- A diet of sensory enriched activities
- Regular access to movement opportunities to provide children's sensory system with the input they requires to achieve a calm alert state.
- Select one or two activities that are powerful and have long lasting effects
- Include the activities in the child's timetable.



# ***Movement Breaks***

- 2-3 minutes of movement can increase concentration for 15-20 minutes.
- Schedule movement breaks at least 3 times daily for the whole class, i.e. Morning, Mid Morning, Mid Afternoon
- [www.yourtherapysource.com](http://www.yourtherapysource.com)







**raise your  
hand**



**clap**



**wiggle your  
toes**



**make a funny  
face**



**bend your  
wrist**



**open & close  
your hands**



**flex your foot**



**bend your  
neck**



Three balloons in green, blue, and purple are positioned on the left side of the slide, each with yellow streamers and small yellow triangles representing confetti or light rays.

# Heavy Work Activities

- Schedule time for specific movement activities daily, i.e. twice daily.
- 15 minutes of activities can last for up to 2 hours
- Think whole body
- Heavy muscle work
- Movement



# Heavy Muscle Work Proprioception

Leap  
Children's Therapy





# Linear Movements Vestibular

Alerting and Organising





# *Rotary Movements* *Vestibular*

Alerting and Exciting  
Be careful not to over arouse!  
Always follow with Proprioceptive activity





# *Oral Motor Strategies*

- Chewing, Crunching, Sucking,
- Chewing gum, crunching carrots, straw drinks





# Oral Motor Strategies

- Chewing, Crunching, Sucking,
- Chewy tubes, Chewellery, Blowing bubbles, vibrating





# *Quick Fix Strategies*

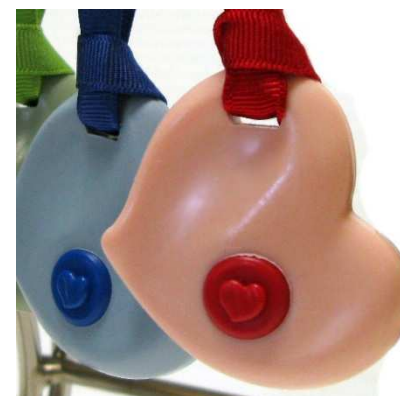
- Theraband, Bear Hug, Back pack





- **Fidgets**

Pushing, pulling, squeezing, massaging





# Weighted Products

- Jacket, blanket, lap pad, miracle belt





# Seating

- Cushions: Move n sit and disco sit
- Busylegz





- Chairs: Sitting posture, Therapy Ball, Ball Chair





## Music

- Mozart for calming and regulating
- Vivaldi for attention
- Clear rhythm and beat for arousal and co-ordination





Three stylized balloons in green, blue, and purple are positioned on the left side of the slide, each with yellow triangular rays emanating from it.

## ***C. Learn***

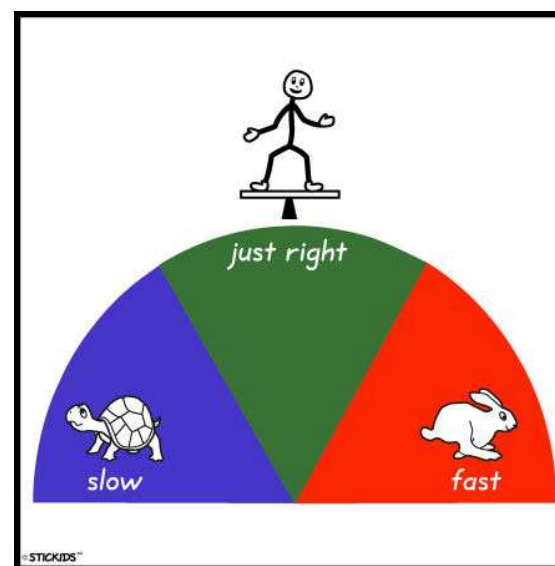
### **Self Regulation**

- How to maintain a *calm alert state*
- How to recognise the body needs
  - When movement needs are escalating
  - When stress and anxiety is escalating
  - When attention is reducing
- How to choose the appropriate activity?



# Self-Regulation

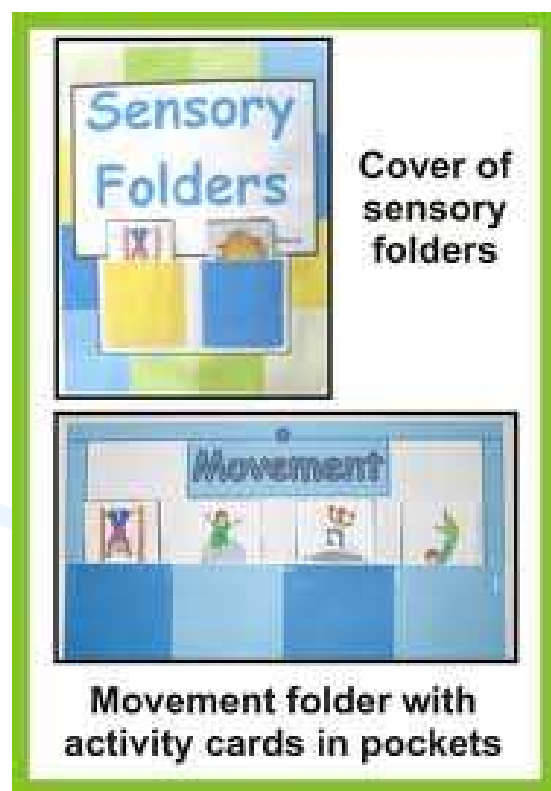
- **Alert Program. “How does your engine run?”. Williams & Shellenberger, 1996 Therapy Works Inc**





- **Sensory Folders**

[www.yourtherapysource.com](http://www.yourtherapysource.com)



**Movement**

**Calming**

**Focus**



A green balloon with yellow streamers, positioned to the left of the first section header.

## • **Relaxation Strategies**

- Breathing
- Pilates

A blue balloon with yellow streamers, positioned to the left of the second section header.

## • **Leisure and Recreational Activities**

- 
- A purple balloon with yellow streamers, positioned to the left of the list of activities.
- Swimming
  - Gym
  - Climbing
  - Trampolining
  - Horse riding



# Low Arousal Child

## You

- Loud
- Animated
- High energy



## Environment

- Bright lights
- Variety of colour
- High energy music

## Sensory

- Activities to alert the child's system
- Use Proprioception, vestibular, tactile
- Fast one directional movements
- Enhance tasks with sensory inputs
- Sensory Diet



# Over- Aroused Child

## **You**

- Low slow voice
- Regular predictable voice pattern
- Minimize gestures and movement



## **Environment**

- Clutter and distraction free
- Dull muted colours
- Quiet and noise free
- Calming music

## **Sensory**

- Slow repetitive activities
- Heavy muscle work
- Sensory Diet with lots of proprioception
- Predictable activities with definite ends



# Sensory Seeking Child

## You

- Low slow voice
- Regular predictable voice rhythm
- Minimize gestures and movements



## Environment

- Clutter and distraction free
- Dull muted colours
- Quiet and noise free
- Calming music

## Sensory

- Active proprioceptive movements
- Linear vestibular movements
- Take out overwhelming activities
- Sensory diet



# Summary



- Each child is a unique individual with a range of sensory thresholds for events in daily life.
- I hope we have sparked your imagination and empowered you to find ways your can help each child.
- Remember

**SEE MOTOR  
THINK  
SENSORY!**



# Question Time?



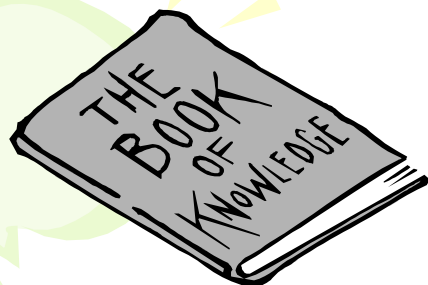




# Resources

- To order sensory resources:
    - [www.homecraft-rolyan.com](http://www.homecraft-rolyan.com)
    - [www.rompa.com](http://www.rompa.com)
    - [www.fledglings.org.uk](http://www.fledglings.org.uk)
    - [www.specialdirect.com](http://www.specialdirect.com)
    - [www.spacekraft.co.uk](http://www.spacekraft.co.uk)
    - [www.specialNeedsToys.com](http://www.specialNeedsToys.com)
    - [www.sensetoys.com](http://www.sensetoys.com)
- 
- 





# References

- **"Autistic Spectrum Disorder: Is it Sensory or is it Behaviour?"** (2005) Murray Slutsky, C; Paris, B.
- **"Sensational Kids- Hope and Help for Children with Sensory Processing Disorder"** (2006) L. Miller  
*Penguin Books Ltd, London*
- **"The Out of Sync Child"** (1998) C. Stock Kranowitz.  
*Skylight Press, New York*
- **"Building Bridges Through Sensory Integration"**  
(2002) E.Yack, P.Aquilla and S.Sutton. *Sensory Resources, Las Vegas*
- **"Aspergers Syndrome and Sensory Issues"**  
(2000) B. Smith Myles, K. Tapscott Cook, N.E Miller, L. Rinner, L.A Robbins. *A.P.C. Kansas*
- **"How Does Your Engine Run?" An Introduction to the Alert Program for Self-Regulation.** (1992).  
Williams, MS and Shellenberger, S.
- **"Sensory Integration and the Child"**.(1979) Ayres,  
A. J. Western Psychological Services. Los Angeles, CA



# Research

- Disc 'o' sit; Pfeiffer, Henry, Miller, Witherell, (2008).
- Weighted Jackets: Vandenberg (2001) and Ferteu-Daly, Bedell, Hinojosa (2001).
- Ball Chairs; Schilling et al (2003)