

# HOW ARE YOU 'WIRED?'

We are all 'wired' a little differently. Most people have some sensory processing issues, but they are minor and don't significantly affect their lives.



If a student is struggling with how they perceive the world around them, they may not know how to communicate this to others, because they may think this is just how the world is. It could feel scary, confusing or overwhelming.

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## SENSORY STRATEGIES TO TRY:

Prepare the child before a change to his schedule is attempted.

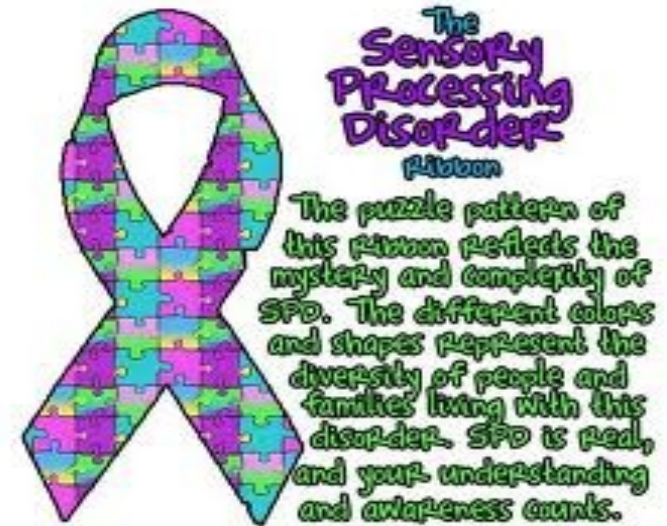
Be predictable and provide structure whenever possible.

When the child is faced with a new situation or asked to learn a new skill, make sure the child's environment is not chaotic but calming.

Be organized and have a game plan. Keep calm, even if the child gets upset. The child will pick up on your energy.

These kids tend to learn best visually and struggle with hearing. Use visual aides whenever possible.

Use common sense: i.e. if the child puts his hands over his ears, turn down the music, give the child headphones to silence the noise, etc.



When the child gets upset ... STOP and REWIND time to determine what could have just happened to cause the problem (it could be something very simple).

Calmly encourage the student to try new experiences, taste new textures and smell new smells—only try one thing at a time and allow the child time to try the activity with the ability to stop the activity if they don't like it.

If trying something new ... don't try big changes. Change one aspect only .. If the change is tolerated you can change another aspect next time.

Document everything you think could be important and let his/her school staff know what you see.

You are the expert of your child. We are here to help you.

# WHAT IS SENSORY PROCESSING?

Sensory Processing helps people 'make sense' of the world around them. Think of all the sensations you experience while dressing, bathing, eating, or riding a bike.

Sensory processing is the process of using our senses together to perceive the world around us. Once we understand this information we can then interact and respond to our world and others.



We usually think of five senses: Sight, Sound, Taste, **Touch** and Smell. We also receive information from our **body position sense (proprioception)**, **movement sense (kinesthesia)** and **balance/head position sense (vestibular)**.

We all receive constant messages from our senses. Most people are able to use these messages to perceive and understand our world. We then interact with the world based on how we interpret these messages.

## TOUCH SENSE (TACTILE)

Touch gives us information from our skin. Every time you touch something or are touched, your skin provides you with detailed information. We process touch as safe, friendly or harmful.



## BODY POSITION SENSE (PROPRIOCEPTION)



Proprioception is our body position sense. Proprioception is the ability of know where any part of your body is in space without having to look. It also helps us know how much pressure to use when we touch someone, pick up a cup filled with water and helps us know how to adjust our pressure. We will sometimes activate this sense to calm us down, i.e. taking a warm bath, wrapping up in a comforter.

## MOVEMENT SENSE (KINESTHESIA)

Kinesthesia receptors are located in our joints and is our body in movement sense. Kinesthesia tells us where our body is at in space while moving. It helps us to coordinate our movements as we navigate through our environment. We will sometimes activate this sense to help us calm down, i.e. rocking a baby to sleep; but may also use this to wake our bodies up, i.e. dancing to music.



## BALANCE/HEAD POSITION SENSE (VESTIBULAR)



Vestibular is our ability to know where our head is at in space. This system allow us to move smoothly and balance while engaged in activities. We use this sense when walking on a balance beam or riding on a skateboard. We will sometimes activate this sense with kinesthesia to calm down or to wake our bodies up.

## SENSES UNITE

Our brains take all of the information we feel, taste, hear, see, smell and along with the above systems, combine all of the messages, process them and help us know what is going on in the world. If we have trouble processing any of these messages, our brain cannot accurately determine what our world is telling our bodies. If we cannot accurately determine what the world is telling us, then how we respond and interact with the world and others may seem inappropriate to others, but may be the right response to what the person think they are perceiving.