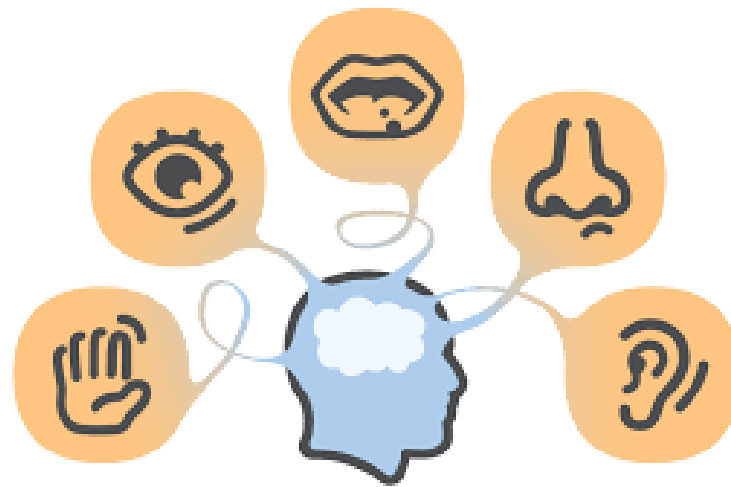


Sensory Processing



All of our experiences, knowledge and understanding of the world around us have been gained from our from information gathered through our **SENSES**.

- We know walls are solid because as children we bumped into them.
- We can recognise sweet, savoury, bitter food because of sense of taste and smell.
- We know we might be in danger if we hear a loud, unexpected sound.
- We are able to cross a road because our senses allow us to see and hear traffic and anticipate how far away moving vehicles are.

Our brains continuously take in sensory information to make sense of what going on around us. When our sensory processing is working as it should, it is a highly complex system that allows us to function.

So what happens when it doesn't function as it should?



What you have just witnessed is **Sensory Processing Disorder** which can also be called:

Sensory Integration Dysfunction

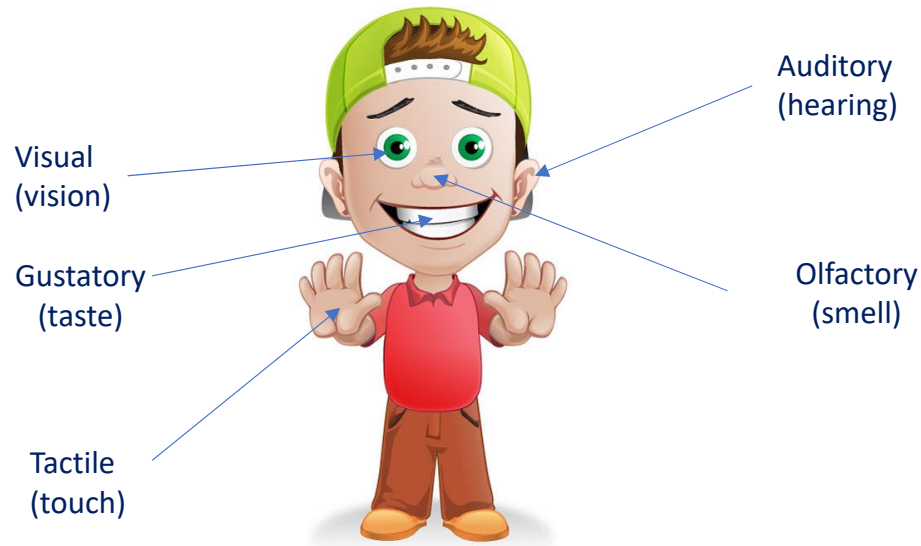
Sensory Sensitivity

Sensory Over responsivity

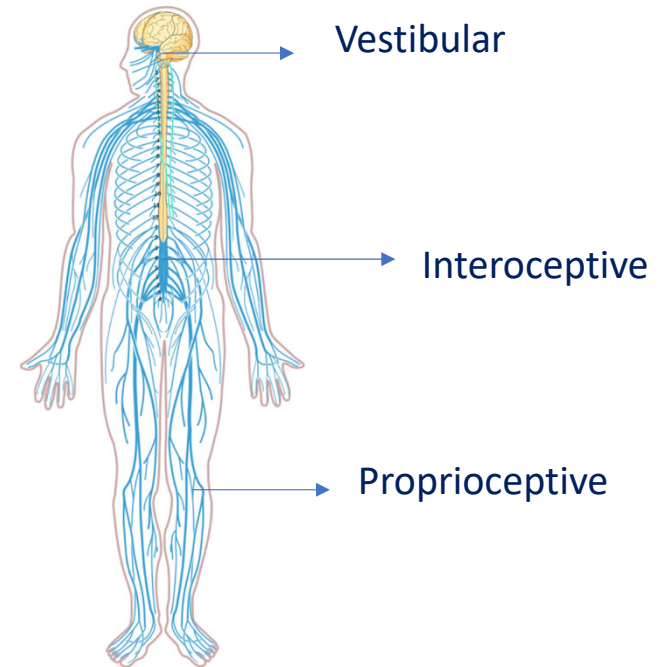
- Unrecognised within the medical profession as a *STAND ALONE* condition.
- Always been thought it occurs alongside other conditions such as Autism, OCD, Tourette's, Bipolar, Depression, Epilepsy, and ADHD.
- However there is growing evidence that it can occur alone.

How many senses
do you think we
have?

External Senses



Internal Senses



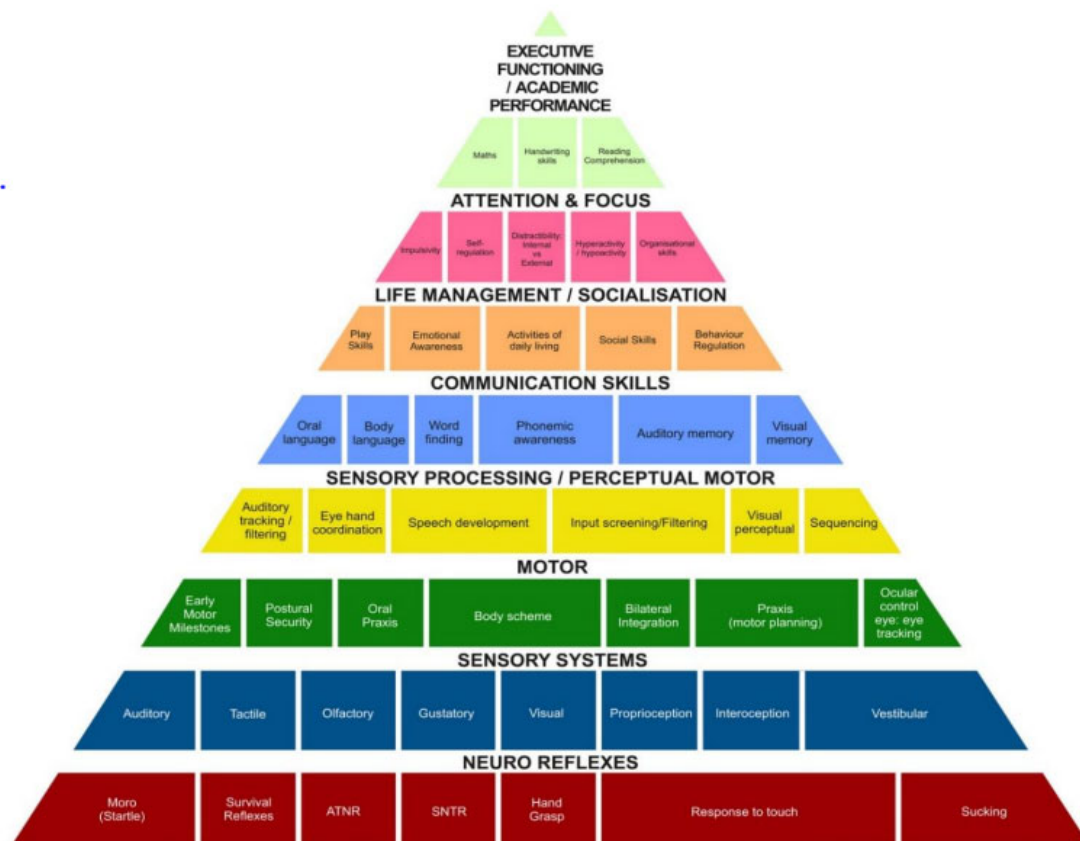
Our Senses:



Until recently it was thought we had five senses but we in fact have EIGHT.

- 1. VISION** – distinguish colour, shade, recognition of faces, movement, lighting, patterns and contrast.
- 2. HEARING** – Gives our environment a constant changing context. E.g. doorbell ringing, roadworks, telephone, music. Without SPD we are able to *FILTER*.
- 3. TOUCH** – The nerve endings in our skin allow us to interpret all kinds of touch from a hug from a family member to lightly brushing past someone. Under and over sensitive differences.
- 4. TASTE and 5. SMELL (these work together)** – Bitter, sour, sweet, salty. Not just a Picky Eater. Eat a sweet from the table, what does it taste like? does it make a difference if you hold your nose?
- 6. PROPRIOCEPTION** – Sense of body awareness (touch your nose with your eyes closed).
- 7. VESTIBULAR** – Inner ear, detects movement and gravity giving us **BALANCE**. (look at a focus point and maintain eye contact whilst turning head side to side or lean over to pick up something from the floor).
- 8. INTEROCEPTION** – Interpret signals from our internal organs. Hunger, thirst , needing the toilet.

Why is sensory processing so important?



Think of the pyramid as a representation of skills that are essential for day to day functioning.

If any of the systems that underpin our foundation have an issue then this will impact our ability to build our pyramid of skills.

The sensory systems are at the base/foundation.

Who is affected?

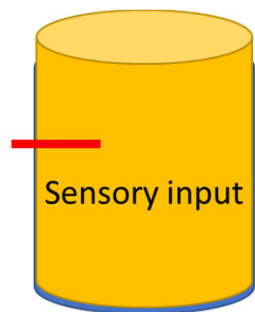
- Children with **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**.
- If you think of children working at **early developmental levels** it is possible that their sensory systems have also not developed.
- Our children with **physical difficulties** may also have not had opportunities to practice and repeat sensory actions therefore their sensory processing is not as developed.
- **ANYONE!** – poorly (dizzy).

How do our children respond to SPD?

The sensory cup analogy

Hypersensitive

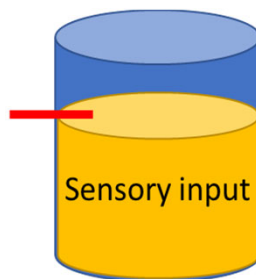
- Over stimulated
- Over sensitive
- Sensory avoider



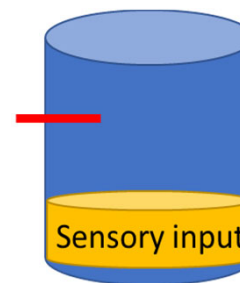
Hypersensitive

Hyposensitive

- Under stimulated
- Under sensitive
- Sensory seeker



Just Right!



Hyposensitive

Examples

If someone is having difficulties with sensory processing and sensory integration, we may see:

A child who avoids moving, climbing, swinging or sliding

A child who doesn't like to be touched by others

A child who refuses to engage in messy play

A child who appears constantly anxious

A child who is half asleep, needs to be prompted to engage in a task

A child who puts their hands over their ears and complains of noise

A child who becomes easily overly excited

A rigid, stiff and tense child

A child who always has to touch objects, people, constantly fiddles with things

A child who can't sit still and constantly fidgets

A child who likes to run and run.

SENSORY OVERLOAD – One or more senses may shut down to enable others to function.

When does this become a challenge?

All behaviour is....

Communication

What our children may be communicating is the fact they need **support with their senses!**

What Can we do?

- **Personalised 'sensory page' on your child's Happiness Passport**– This will be written by your child's class teacher/our sensory OT/myself depending on the level of their need. It will identify the sensory system/systems they have a need within, whether they are seeking or avoiding in that area and what we can do at school and home to support this.
- **Sensory equipment**- used to address specific sensory imbalances. For example, ear defenders for a child who is hypersensitive (avoiding) in their hearing and is distressed by loud noises or a fiddle toy for a child that is seeking out tactile sensory input.
- **For all sensory SEEKING behaviour**- we need to **FEED THE NEED**.



***Lets take a look at some
equipment we use to support
sensory processing at Riverside
School***