

# SEND NEWSLETTER

Orton Wistow Primary School

Welcome to issue 2 of our termly newsletter specifically for parents and carers of children with SEND.

Our first newsletter was an introduction to the SEND team and a brief overview of some of the different areas of provision within school.

Since our first issue we have welcomed Mrs Faye Robinson to our SEND team. Faye has experience working within the EYFS and is knowledgeable of SEND. She will be supporting Linda one day per week fulfilling the role of SEND Administrator.

Did you know we have a SEND section on our School website?

Here, you can access our latest SEND Information report, Inclusion policy, our termly newsletter and many useful links for our SEND families.

<https://www.owps.org.uk/special-education-needs-sen-at-owps>

In the latest issue, we explore in more detail, sensory processing differences and difficulties.

**Your SEN  
Coordinator  
(SENCO)**



**Mrs Linda Harries**

# WHAT IS A SENSORY SYSTEM?

We use our sensory systems to understand the world around us.

We process information through our senses and decide on how to respond to the things we are experiencing.

Sensory Systems that absorb information about the world around us are ;

- Sight
- Taste (gustatory)
- Smell (olfactory)
- Hearing (auditory)
- Touch (tactile)
- Proprioception (using our muscles to understand where our body is in space)
- Vestibular (the sense of how the body moves against gravity)

The last 3 sensory systems – touch, proprioception and vestibular – help us to feel in tune with our world and to feel grounded as a person.

## Sensory Systems



Learning how to process sensory-based information as it is received can be challenging for all of us at times, but more challenging for a child with a learning disability. We have to filter out what things are important and what things to ignore. For instance, if we hear our name being called, we respond to this, even though there may be other sounds in the room that could distract us. Some children have difficulty with this filtering process.

# EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOURS THAT MAY INDICATE SENSORY PROCESSING NEEDS

Many of these behaviours are not uncommon, but sometimes they can be persistent and impact on quality of life:

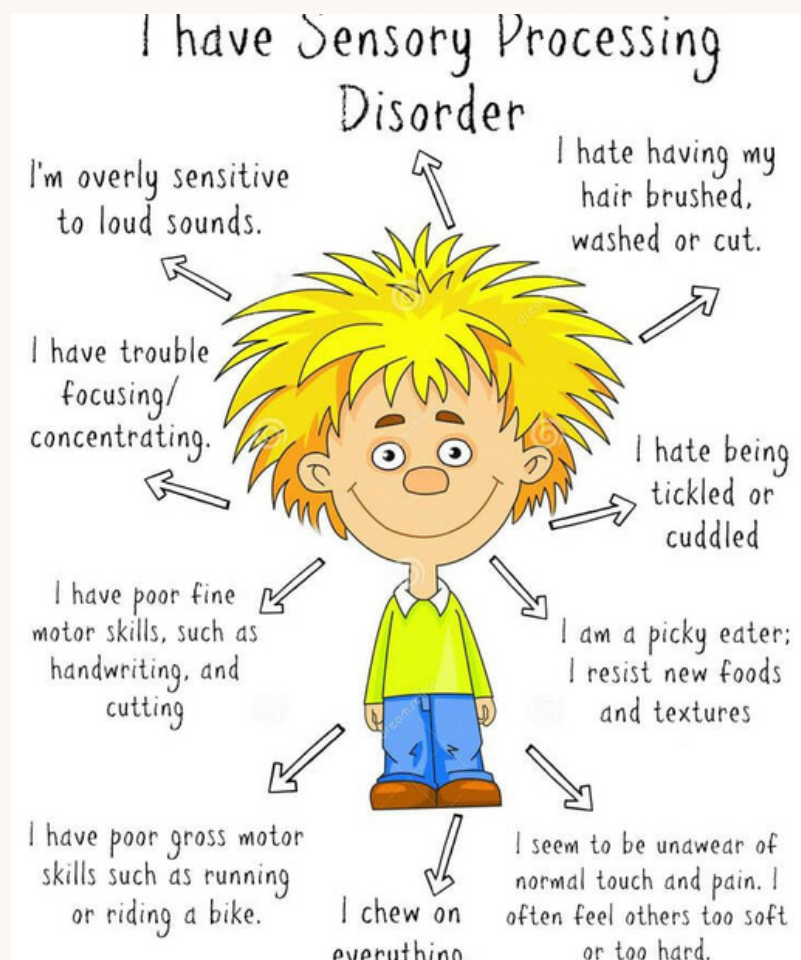


Photo sourced from : <https://onlineedu.neit.edu/blog/2016/11/17/sensory-processing-disorder-a-better-understanding/>

## BEING OVERLOADED BY VISUAL OR SOUND INPUT.

THIS MAY AFFECT THEIR ABILITY TO CONCENTRATE.

## DIFFICULTY WITH POSTURE AND CO-ORDINATION.

THIS MAY REPRESENT A CHILD WHOSE MUSCLE AND MOVEMENT SYSTEMS ARE NOT AS EFFICIENT.

## RUNNING OUT OF BUSY PLACES WHEN THERE ARE LOTS OF VISUALS AND/OR SOUNDS PRESENT

THIS MAY BE A CHILD WHO CANNOT COPE WITH PROCESSING SO MANY DIFFERENT THINGS AT ONE TIME.

## SEEKING LOTS OF PHYSICAL MOVEMENT THROUGH THE DAY.

THIS MAY BE A CHILD WHO NEEDS MORE INFORMATION INTO THEIR MUSCLE AND MOVEMENT SYSTEMS, TO TELL THEM WHERE THEY ARE IN SPACE.

## SENSITIVITY TO LIGHT TOUCH.

YOUR CHILD MAY BE VERY SENSITIVE TO UNEXPECTED OR LIGHT TOUCH AND HAVE AN ANXIOUS RESPONSE TO IT.

## SEEKING HEAVY TOUCH AND HUGS.

YOUR CHILD MAY SEEK LOTS OF HEAVY TOUCH, THROUGH HUGS FOR EXAMPLE, TO GET MORE INPUT TO THEIR TOUCH SYSTEM. THIS CAN BE CALMING FOR THEM.

# WHAT YOU CAN DO AS A PARENT/CARER?



**Consider patterns of behaviour. Reasons may be many and varied, but among them may be some of the following:**

- Your child may be trying to feed a sensory system that they are not so good at registering.
- You may also find that if your child receives too many stimuli, they reach an overload state, and this can lead to a state of high anxiety.
- **Often children instinctively know what they need and may be giving you clues as to what sensory input they are seeking, or what they are unable to cope with.**
- Think about what things your child may be sensitive to; such as light touch or hair brushing.
- If your child is seeking more input, see if there are ways to support your child through sensory based activities that “feed” sensory needs in the right way (e.g. movement breaks between sedentary activities).
- You may find that your child seeks certain sensory stimulation – this may be an attempt to “kick start” a system that is not as active as the child needs it to be.

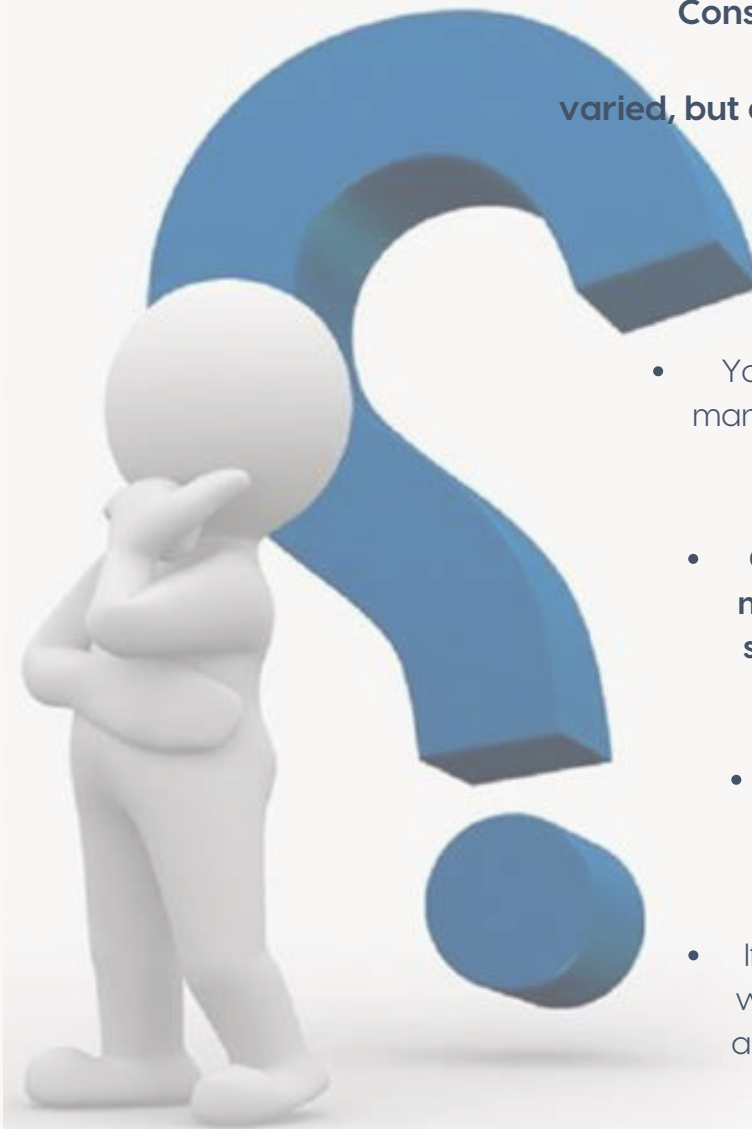


Photo sourced from :

<https://www.baamboozle.com/game/1091401>



# Sensory circuits and movement breaks

## by Rosie MacColl - Assistant SENCO



### " The Nest"

The Nest" is our assigned area for children to participate in daily Sensory Circuits and movement breaks throughout the day.

"Children who have been assessed by Occupational Therapy often require daily Sensory Circuits. The activities are designed to improve brain processing efficiency. This helps to regulate them during the day. A lot of children benefit from the circuits first thing in the morning.

The circuit is broken down into 3 sections – alerting – organising – calming. In each section there are 2-3 exercises that the children participate in.

Alerting – the aim of this section is to provide vestibular and proprioceptive stimulation within a controlled setting. This prepares the brain for learning.

Organising – this section requires motor sensory processing, balance, and timing. The child needs to organise their body, plan their approach and do more than one thing at a time in a sequential order.

Calming – the calming activities are especially important as they provide input to ensure that children leave the circuit and return to their classroom calm and ready for the day. It is important that the calming exercises are completed at the end of the session. The circuits should take about 10-15 mins to complete.

Movement breaks can be taken when a child is feeling dysregulated and needs a break away from their work. Some exercises can be completed in class, like "chair push-ups", an easy exercise to incorporate at any time the child feels they are starting to get a little fidgety, although children tend to prefer to use The Nest. There is a list of exercises the children can participate in, these are displayed on the wall and easy to follow. Unlike a circuit, movement breaks need only be for 5 minutes. Again, it is imperative that the child completes a calming exercise at the end.

A short movement break will help the child to relax, breathe and re-focus enabling them to continue with their learning, especially if they get the whole body moving in a rapid, cardiovascular activity as this increases the child's breathing rate and oxygen in their bloodstream.

We know that for some children being away from school, like at the weekends and holidays, this can be a challenge on their sensory needs.

Some ideas for home to help your child could be as simple as getting them to help you with the washing, loading, and unloading the washing machine, helping to put the shopping away or letting them help with the cleaning the house. In the summer let them water the garden for you or sweep the patio. These are heavy work activities which can help to regulate your child throughout the day. A trip to the park to play on the climbing frame or pushing a sibling on the swings, jumping on a trampoline are also good heavy work for your child, and fun!

If your child is feeling tired or sleepy, try some alerting activities. These include skipping, bouncing on a trampoline, playing some action songs, for example; Row, Row, Row your Boat or Simon Says.

Once you have completed some alerting activities, including some organising activities will help to regulate your child. Kicking a ball to each other, making an obstacle course around the garden with some balancing, catching, throwing, and crawling activities is a great way to incorporate this.

Once these are complete remember to help your child to calm down. A great way to help your child regulate is to provide a foot or hand massage, applying deep pressure down their arms, hands, or feet. Shoulder massages are also good for helping to regulate your child.