

Agenda



9.30 updates

10-12.30 Strictly Come Sensory with Michelle Rundle, OT.

12.30-1.15 Lunch

1.15 Olivia Kelly- overview new framework

1.45 EPS-Service update

2.05 Hub model and IPF update

Context

- Ongoing challenging context nationally- seen locally
- Waiting on the White Paper
- Clear that extending the offer in mainstream with specialist support is the direction
- Need to work together to effectively support children- SENCos are crucial in this- mindful of pressures on you
- Are subsidising downloadable training on NYES for 12 months- now free to NY schools and academies

'It is not inclusion if you invite people into a space you are unwilling to change' -Dr Muna Abdi

Updates

- Digital EHCP programme progressing- will have agreed system by Jan
- Timeliness of EHCPs improving- Q1 25-26 compared to previous year saw double the plans issued, yet timeliness was up to 73% in June
- Consent- we must have INFORMED parental consent for EHCAR- and YP over 13 must consent themselves

Let us know your views

We want to let you know that the consultation on proposed changes to how we support primary-aged children who have been permanently excluded from school is now live.

As part of our wider SEND transformation programme, we are exploring a more inclusive model where education would be delivered in dedicated settings commissioned through external providers. We encourage you to read the consultation materials, complete the consultation questions and share your views with us. We welcome your feedback and will review all the responses received when the consultation closes.

How to take part:

- Read the consultation details
- Complete the survey here: [Alternative Provision for Primary Exclusions consultation | North Yorkshire Council](#)

The consultation will run for seven weeks, and the feedback will help shape the future of this service. Updates will be shared via the intranet and team briefings.



Part-Time Timetable Protocol

- Identifies the **exceptional circumstances** in which it may be appropriate to put one in place
- Sets out the **procedures** that **must** be followed
- Outlines schools duty to **notify the LA** of any children on a part-time timetable
- LA notified of 87 children on a PTT at present, 71 of these are since 1st September 2025.
- 33 of the 87 have had multiple PTT's – are they working?
- **Part-Time Timetable Protocol:** [PTT Protocol June 25 final.docx](#)
- Notify LA via 
- Schools enter a 'proposed' end date & once passed if the child is still on a PTT, schools must notify LA again
- If child is expected to attend as part of a PTT, but does not, this should be an 'unauthorised' absence, unless an authorised reason is given

Elective Home Education

Numbers of children on EHE continue to rise- about 1.7%

The LA are increasing resource for one year to work together to reduce EHE

Offering pre decision meeting works well

Staff in schools must not suggest EHE as an option

Strengthening protections in non-school AP Government Response to Consult & voluntary national standards

Main Proposals from the Consultation

1. Time-Limited Placements

Children should remain on the school roll during AP placements.

Placements should be temporary, with a clear plan for reintegration.

2. Local Authority Oversight

LAs must not use unregistered AP to meet Section 19 duties unless the child is on a school roll.

LAs will be responsible for quality assurance of all unregistered AP placements in their area.

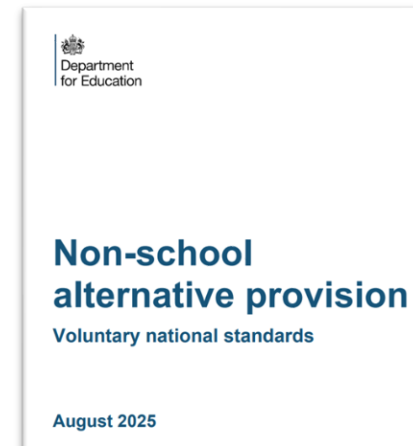
3. EOTAS Provision

LAs can arrange for all of a child's EOTAS provision to be delivered in a single unregistered AP setting.

Providers delivering EOTAS must register with the DfE.

4. Mandatory National Standards

All unregistered AP providers will be expected to comply with new national standards (currently voluntary).



The Standards Cover Four Core Themes:

1. Safeguarding and Child Welfare
2. Health and Safety
3. Admissions, Support and Guidance
4. Quality of Education

Who Should Use These Standards?

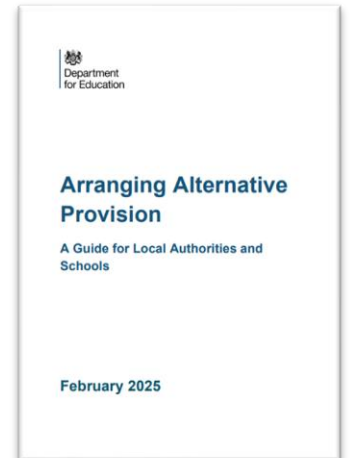
- Local authorities, schools, and commissioners arranging placements.
- Providers for self-evaluation.
- Parents and carers seeking reassurance about the quality and safety of provision.

Key impact

AP is a time limited intervention

- Short Term – up to 10 sessions (half day) for up to 12 weeks
- Part Time – up to 4 sessions (half day) per week, ongoing

Schools to regularly review placement





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- **Every teacher a teacher of SEND**
- **Every leader a leader of SEND**
- **Every governor a governor of SEND**



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National Updates



Writing Framework

The writing framework

Page 74 - Section 5: Pupils who need the most support

The writing framework

July 2025

Writing Framework

Page 79

Audit: Keeping up from the start

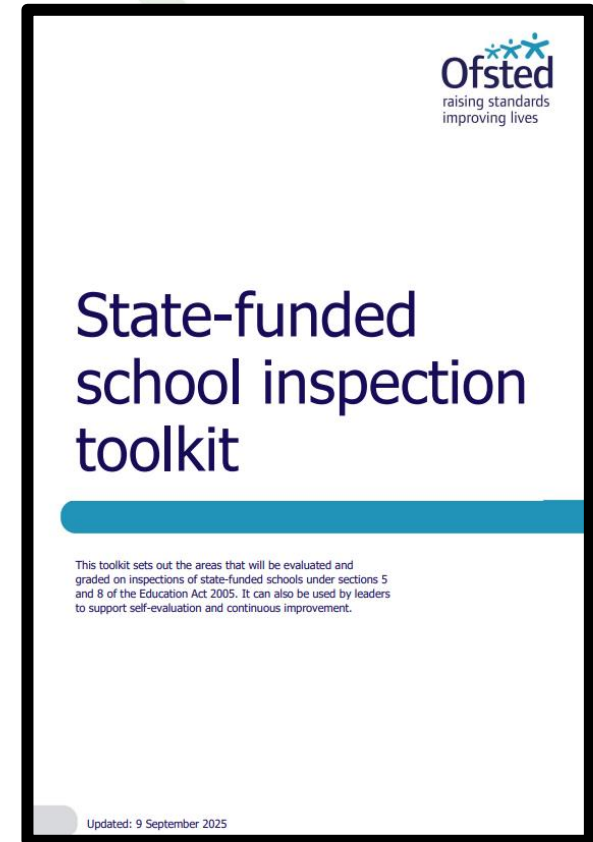
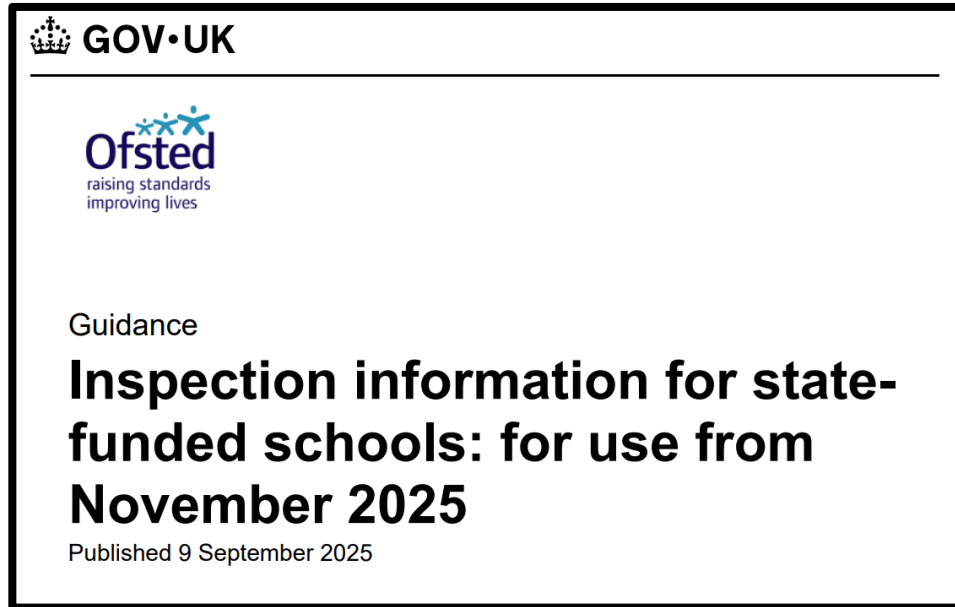
Supporting pupils in class	Current practice
Writing teaching is of the highest quality to give all pupils the best opportunity to achieve.	
Teachers use assessment to make sure writing teaching is sequenced to match pupils' existing knowledge.	
A well-planned writing curriculum ensures pupils are taught and have sufficient opportunity to practise and apply the foundational writing skills of handwriting, spelling and sentence building.	
Pupils who find writing difficult and are at risk of falling behind in any aspect of transcription or composition are identified quickly.	
Pupils who find writing difficult receive the teaching and practice they need to become fluent with transcription.	
The progress of each pupil is monitored and sufficient support accelerates progress, including for new arrivals and pupils who are learning English as an additional language.	
Adults value pupils' spoken composition and support all pupils to compose orally, including and especially when transcription is more challenging for the pupil.	
Actions to be taken:	Term actions to be reviewed by:

Page 85

Audit: Pupils who need further support

Pupils who need further support	Current practice
Teachers use the graduated approach of 'assess, plan, do, review' to help build an ongoing understanding of pupils' needs and to provide individualised support that accelerates their progress.	
Effective teaching supports pupils to catch up rapidly.	
Each pupil receiving extra support is profiled to identify any SEND (if not already identified); any speech, communication and language needs; their attendance; time at the school, and previous teaching.	
Leaders support and monitor interventions closely and evaluate the impact on pupils' progress regularly.	
Actions to be taken:	Term actions to be reviewed by:

Ofsted – Renewed Ofsted Framework



[Education inspection framework: for use from November 2025](#)

[- GOV.UK](#)

[School inspection: toolkit, operating guide and information](#)
[GOV.UK](#)



Ofsted – Renewed Ofsted Framework



Throughout inspections, inspectors will give particular attention to the experiences and outcomes of disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), pupils known or previously known to children's social care and those who face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being. These groups are central to planning, inspection activity and evaluation.



Ofsted – Renewed Ofsted Framework

Ofsted evaluation areas:

- Safeguarding
- Inclusion
- Curriculum and teaching
- Achievement
- Attendance and behaviour
- Personal development and well-being
- Early years
- Post-16 provision
- Leadership and governance

Each evaluation area includes:

- The theme – heading
- Evidence gathering prompts – this guides conversations and activities during the inspection

Ofsted – Renewed Ofsted Framework

5 Point Grading Scale

- Urgent Improvement
- Needs attention
- **Expected standard** — *schools need to meet all the standards to ensure secure fit for expected standard*
- Strong standard
- Exceptional

Safeguarding is graded as met/not met

Ofsted – Renewed Ofsted Framework

Inclusion

Inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of the systems and procedures in place for identifying pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

Inspectors will review the support pupils receive and how leaders review provision and impact. They will do this through:

- Reviewing the ISDR
- Case sampling
- Speaking to leaders how needs are identified and met
- Learning walks

Case Sampling – What is it?

- Inspectors will track pupils with SEND and disadvantage pupils across the school day.
- Case sampling is **NOT** case studies
- The inspectors will select the pupils for case sampling
- The initial sample will include pupils who have specific needs or face particular barriers to learning. This may include disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND (especially those with an EHC plan), those known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being.
- Case sampling allows inspectors to understand pupils' experiences, the support they receive and the progress they are making from their starting points.
- **Case sampling will involve** learning walk, reviewing work, review of support plans, pupil voice, staff voice and reviewing of progress data.

Ofsted – Renewed Ofsted Framework

Toolkits

- These are the standards that are used to inform grading.
- They support a shared understanding of what is required within each evaluation area and are used as prompts for discussions and to tailor activities.

Ofsted – Renewed Ofsted Framework

Inclusion Evaluation Area Toolkit – page 10



This evaluation area considers how leaders and staff identify and support:

- socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for the pupil premium)
- pupils with SEND; this means pupils receiving special educational needs (SEN) support, and those with an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, such as children in need and looked-after children
- pupils who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being, which may include pupils who share a protected characteristic



Ofsted – Renewed Ofsted Framework

Grading inclusion



Needs attention	Expected standard	Strong standard
Inclusion is likely to be graded 'needs attention' when the 'expected standard' has not been met. This may include when one or more of the following applies: ■ Leaders have only recently started to take appropriate action to identify and assess pupils' needs or reduce barriers to pupils' learning and/or well-being. ■ Weaknesses or inconsistencies in practice have a negative impact on a particular group of pupils. ■ Leaders' use of alternative provision has limited positive impact on pupils' learning and/or well-being.	Inclusion meets the 'expected standard' when all the following apply: Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately, including any emerging or changing needs. This includes the needs of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being. Leaders have high expectations for these pupils. Typically, the support they provide (following specialist advice if needed) reduces barriers to their learning and/or well-being. Leaders take a graduated approach (as explained earlier), which means pupils' needs are generally met. Staff receive suitable training and support to implement this approach. Leaders have a secure understanding of these pupils' needs and the progress they make. They use appropriate evidence to inform their pupil premium strategy, including when selecting approaches to take. The strategy and approaches are generally understood and implemented by staff.	Inclusion meets the 'strong standard' when the 'expected standard' has been met and all the following apply: Leaders and staff establish strategies that consistently enhance the opportunities and experiences of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being. Leaders and staff rigorously monitor the progress of these pupils and consistently ensure that any barriers to success are swiftly and effectively addressed. Strategies are systematically and skilfully adjusted as needed, so that they make a sustained difference to pupils' opportunities and experiences. Well-analysed, quantitative and qualitative data underpins leaders' decisions. Leaders ensure that the pupil premium strategy is implemented and monitored effectively, including through ongoing, high-quality training and support for staff.

Ofsted – Renewed Ofsted Framework

Needs attention	Expected standard	Strong standard
	The qualified SENCo has sufficient authority within the leadership structure to make a positive difference for pupils with SEND. Leaders are committed to, and understand, their role in the local area partnership's strategy to improve the experiences of, and outcomes for, pupils with SEND. Where appropriate, they ensure that local partnership strategies have a positive impact on pupils at the school. Leaders support pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, including looked-after and previously looked-after children, well. Staff work effectively, including with the virtual school, so that pupils' personal education plans generally improve their learning opportunities and experiences. Alternative provision is commissioned appropriately and is used in pupils' best interests. Leaders take responsibility for the education and welfare of pupils who are placed in it.	

SEND – Ofsted Framework

Evidence Gathering Prompts



SEND	Evidence	Next Steps
Leaders understand that the most effective inclusion strategy begins with every day high quality inclusive teaching, which has most benefit for the pupils who find learning hardest and reduces the need for individual adaptations.		
Leaders have established a culture in which staff understand the range of barriers that pupils may face to their learning and/or well-being, including those specific to their community and the school's context; they quickly and accurately identify pupils facing these barriers.		
Leaders make sure pupils receive effective support, consult with external specialists and implement their advice as necessary, and ensure that appropriate reasonable adjustments are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice		

Inclusion is the 'golden thread' through the Renewed Ofsted Framework.

Activity



SEND	Evidence	Next Steps
Leaders understand that the most effective inclusion strategy begins with every day high quality inclusive teaching, which has most benefit for the pupils who find learning hardest and reduces the need for individual adaptations.		
Leaders have established a system to which staff understand the range of barriers that pupils may face to their learning and are working, including those specific to their curriculum and the school's context, they quickly and accurately identify pupils facing these barriers.		
Leaders make sure pupils are not affected by support, consult with external organisations and implement their action as necessary, and ensure that appropriate reasonable adjustments are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice.		

All SEND-related prompts from the Ofsted Framework's judgement areas have been collated into a single reference table.

1. Read through each SEND-related bullet point in the table. Highlight those that are clearly evident in your school's current practice.

2. List specific examples or documents that demonstrate how your school meets this expectation

Resources

[Home page | Nasen](#)

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Helping Everyone Achieve ■■■

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Resources



Resources

Welcome to CYPSSinfo | CYPSSinfo (northyorks.gov.uk)

CYPSS Info

- Generic Login for your school or SENCo support only

senco815

NY_cyps2019



- ▼ Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion
 - Alternative provision
 - Disabled children's service and the children's resource centres
 - Early identification of SEND in schools
 - Exclusions
 - Inclusion Funding (Element 2)
 - Medical education service
 - SEN Support Funding
- SENCo Support
 - SEND education provision in North Yorkshire
 - SEND hubs
- SEND support
 - SEND transport
 - Specialist careers advice
 - Statutory SEND Processes (EHC Assessments and EHCPs)
 - Support from SEND and Inclusion
 - Targeted provision



Educational Psychology Offer 2025-2026



Responding to Feedback

February 2025 Networks

Access: a named person to contact/a termly meeting to discuss individuals and advise/general advice around individual cases/easier access, telephone contact/ full school involvement on our wants and needs.

EHCPs: how can we access updated assessments if needs change? /face to face observations/process smoother, can we have the advice written more personal to the child?

Consultations: EP and parent time in meetings (not just professionals)/direct consultations with all involved/full parental involvement.

Training & Resources: ELSA training/access to resources online/staff training/how do we access recommended training?/Spotlight: each with a different focus/area of need.

Traded and Core Offer: can we access?/what is the offer?/can we offer to children who have been adopted who require trauma support?/what about hours we still have from before?



Building EP Service Delivery

Current offer

- Increasing connection in the area e.g. SEPs
- TMPs and Transition involvement
- Building proactive offer e.g. ELSA, consultations.
- Increased offer to EHC needs assessments.

Build a more proactive offer

- Needs-led models – consultation/ joint problem solving
- Build skill and capacity within the workforce to meet the significant challenges in schools e.g. Attendance and engagement, engaging purposefully with trauma informed approaches.
- Specific cohorts

Educational Psychology Team Offer 2025-26

All schools will be able to access:

Spotlights Online Twilights - free half termly Spotlight training delivered run by the EP team online. The focus/priorities were identified at the SENCO networks, and we will continue to revisit these throughout the year with SENCOs to make sure they respond to current issues.

Statutory Offer –

Advice to the SEND team for EHC needs assessments and contribute to tribunals and complex cases. All statutory work is identified in NYC via the SEND team and caseworkers.

The NY EP team will undertake EHC assessment work for the following year groups: Nursery, reception/Y1 Y5 and Y7. EPs will work primarily in their geographical area to build connections with local schools through this work.

We continue to use locum EPs to support our statutory duties and have increased number of locum EPs able to undertake face to face assessments alongside remote assessments.





Educational Psychology Offer to Primary schools

Sept. 2025 – July 2026

- Consider 'clusters' of schools nominated EPs would have sessions over the year for those clusters
- Have an initial conversation about needs in area/consider data, then a flexible offer e.g. offering consultation drop-ins, training/workforce development, some type of 'supervision' offer

- Assistant EP – Support for SEND targeted annual reviews (we will liaise with SEND further re: identifying these)
- Assistant EP – Solution Circles e.g. a focus on Lost Learning

Educational Psychology Offer to Primary schools Sept. 2025 – July 2026



Offer to Secondary Schools

Sept. 2025 – July 2026

Link EP team member to all secondary schools, special schools, LA nursery schools. An offer to the Targeted Mainstream Provisions will continue.

Offer to Secondary Schools

Sept. 2025 – July 2026

Link EP will contact you to arrange an initial planning/support meeting. The EP will discuss our consultation approach and how to make the most out of the EP time available. You will then prioritise and plan the work for the upcoming year. EP work might include:

- Consultations around individual children, or staff drop ins
- Work on targeted cohorts
- Whole school development/ support



Targeted or Identified Offer

Your school may access EP support via a targeted project.

Transitions Project: If your school is part of the transitions project you will receive additional EP time. You do not need to do anything to access this support. CYP have already been identified and consent gained from parents.

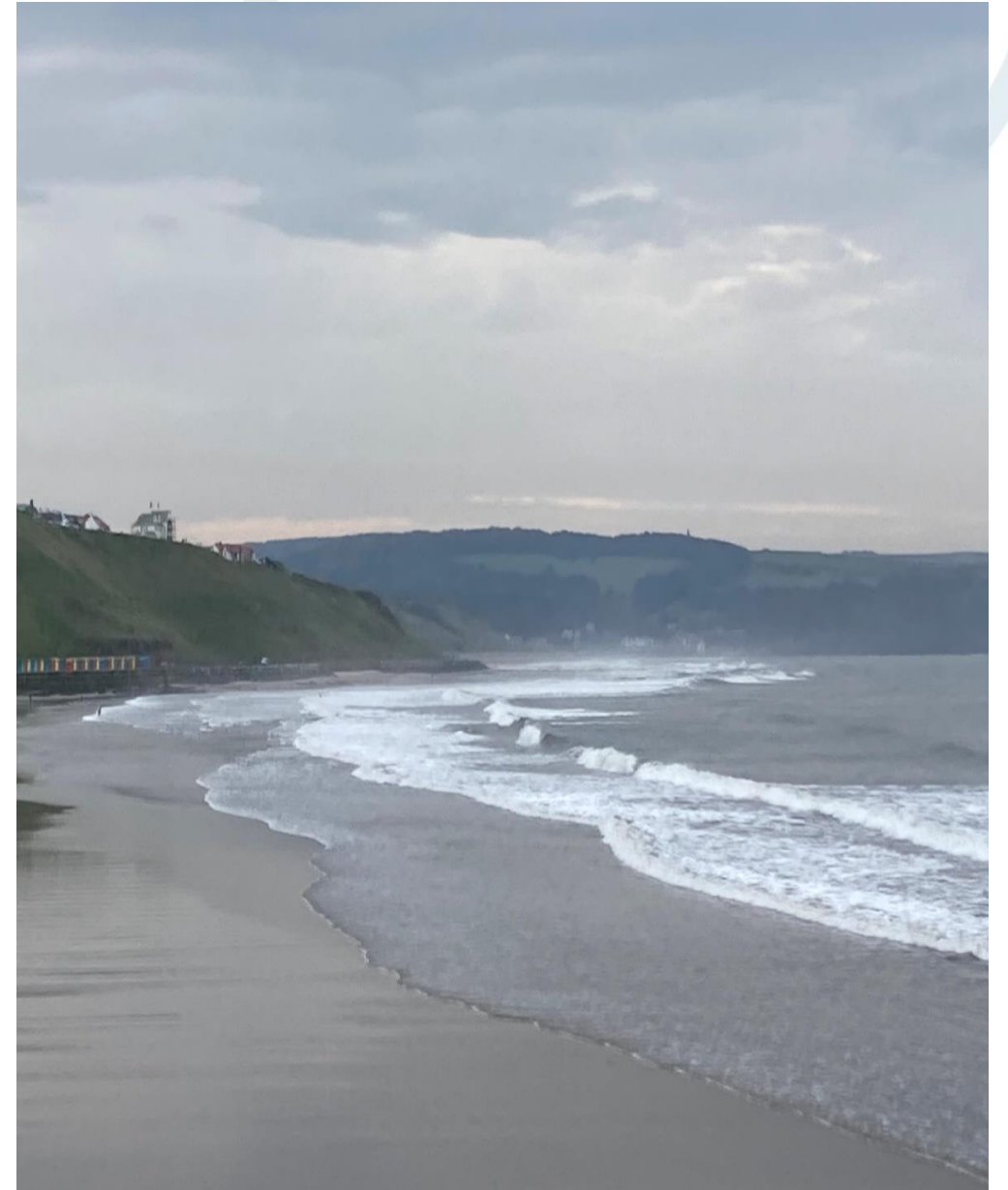
Virtual School: The EP team provide support to the Virtual School via a Specialist Senior EP. The EP team will offer trauma informed training for schools who are supporting a child who is looked after. This can be discussed with the Virtual school if required.

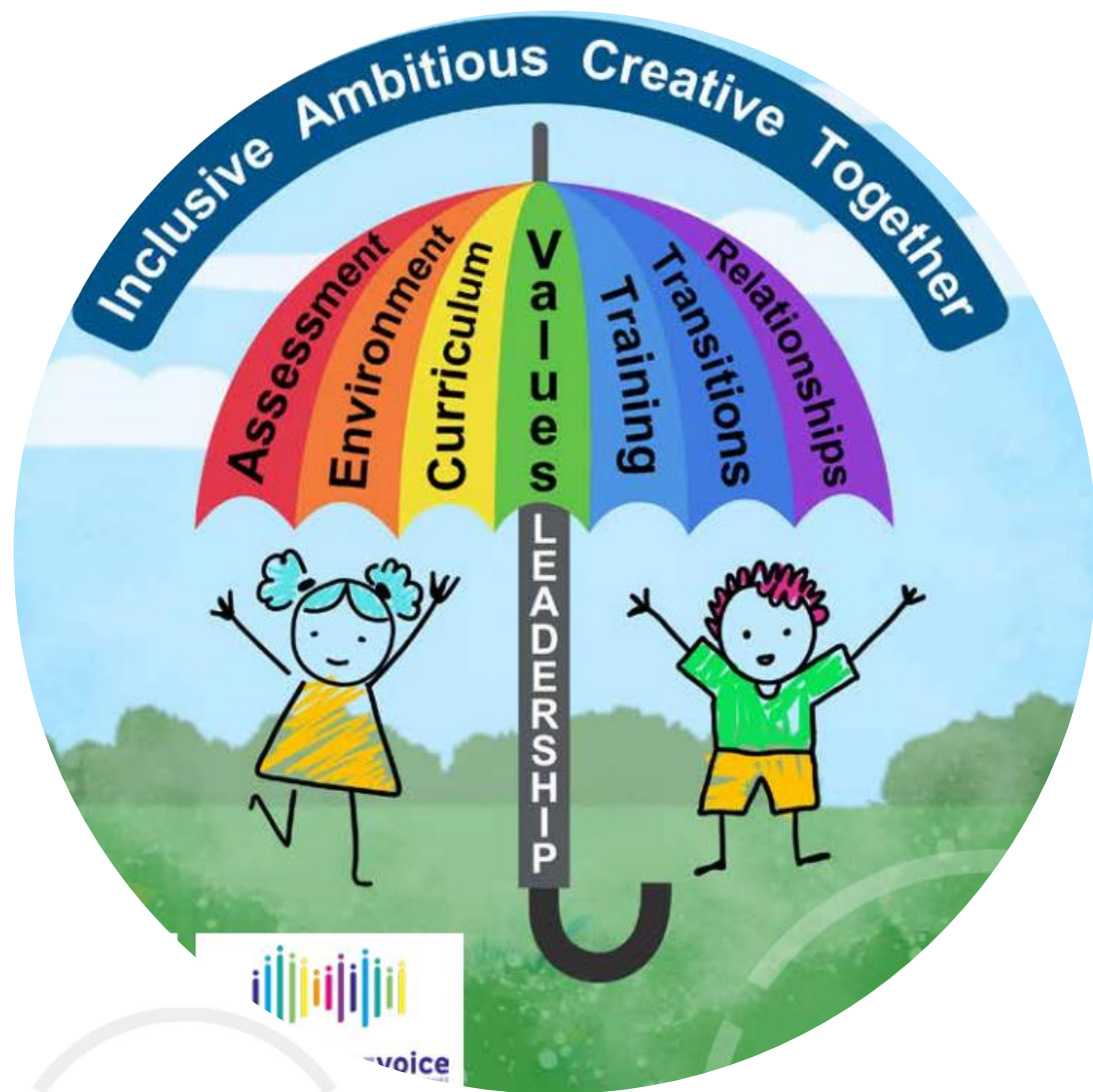
Traded Offer

Traded offer is focusing on Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs), initially delivering the supervision support from EPs to current ELSAs. ELSA is an evidenced-based approach to be early intervention and supports inclusive practice for all. It is a foundation for support around SEMH needs and responds to many of the challenges being raised around belonging and inclusion.

We will be expanding the traded offer over the course of the year. Details will be available on www.nyeducationalservices.co.uk

- Comments/ Questions/Next Time?
- SWR Contacts: pamela.melville@northyorks.gov.uk
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jen.gould@northyorks.gov.uk
ruth.watson@northyorks.gov.uk
- HamRich Contacts: Shared on previous slide





Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision Update

The name has been changed
Updates are currently being added
to reflect the new Ofsted toolkits
and framework

It is with the design team now and
will be launched this term!!!



The Framework

For schools:

The Framework:

Provides a wide range of strategies and best practice approaches to meet the needs of CYP with SEND and additional needs. It is NOT an exhaustive list.

It can facilitate conversations with parents, CYP and external professionals offering suggestions for reasonable adjustments

It is designed to be used as part of a whole school's approach to embedding High Quality teaching and whole school SEND support throughout policies, curriculum and ethos.



Section One

There are eight inclusive practice strands that offer guidance to school leaders on what provision needs to be in place to support children and young people and their families in school and what this should look like in practice. The teachers' standards and OFSTED framework are also referenced for school leaders to be able to easily link with school development documents and professional development for staff.

Section Two

The four broad areas of need, as described in the SEN Code of Practice (2015), are highlighted alongside barriers to learning (what you might see) and strategies/resources are suggested for you to try to reduce the impact of these barriers in the school and home environment.

The Whole School Self-Evaluation Tool

This is an accompanying audit tool to reflect the inclusive strands and principles outlined in section one. It has been produced to support school leaders and SENDCo's to evaluate, develop and strengthen their inclusive offer, thereby improving the educational experiences for children and young people with SEND/additional needs.

Teacher Toolkit

This is an accompanying tool that can be used as a quick reference guide for section 2. It has been produced to support teachers to quickly navigate section 2 to locate strategies and resources to use in subsequent intervention plans.

Additional Guides for the Framework

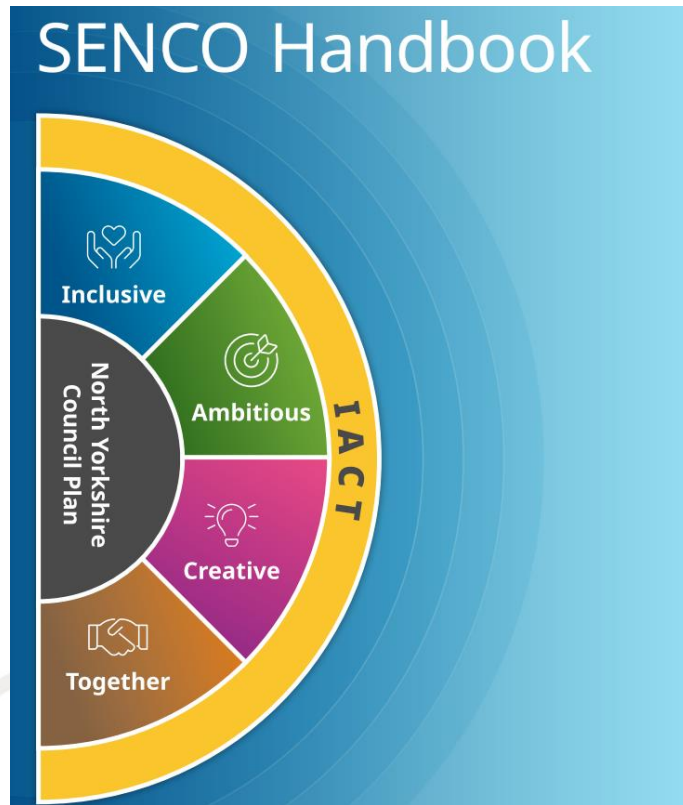
Parent Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide parents and carers with an overview of the framework. This was co-produced with parents.

Self -Evaluation Tool User Guide

Webinars

Other Incoming Support



Reviewing model and offer

High demand, few staff!

- Repeat visits to school for the same thing
- Some schools expecting "1:1"
- Travel and child not there
- Instances of staff being treated with disrespect
- Recommendations not followed- but tell us if it's not working!

Need to be partners in support for children and work where we will make a difference- focusing on building skill and capacity

'It is not inclusion if you invite people into a space you are unwilling to change' -Dr Muna Abdi



Changes

THE REFERRAL FORM!!!



Will be sharing an MoU with you when we start a piece of work

- Agree the outcomes of the work
- Ensure focus is on developing skill and capacity – not just one child- for others in the future too
- How will you share this learning?
 - Offer of staff meetings/team training
 - Might direct to online training
- Unsuccessful visits may not be rebooked

Strictly come sensory

Michelle Rundle

Occupational Therapist



Who am I?

Occupational Therapist

30 years in special schools and Child Development Centre (NHS)

Hobbies: Crafting/creating, reading, photography, walking

Sensory preference: Auditory

Activity 1

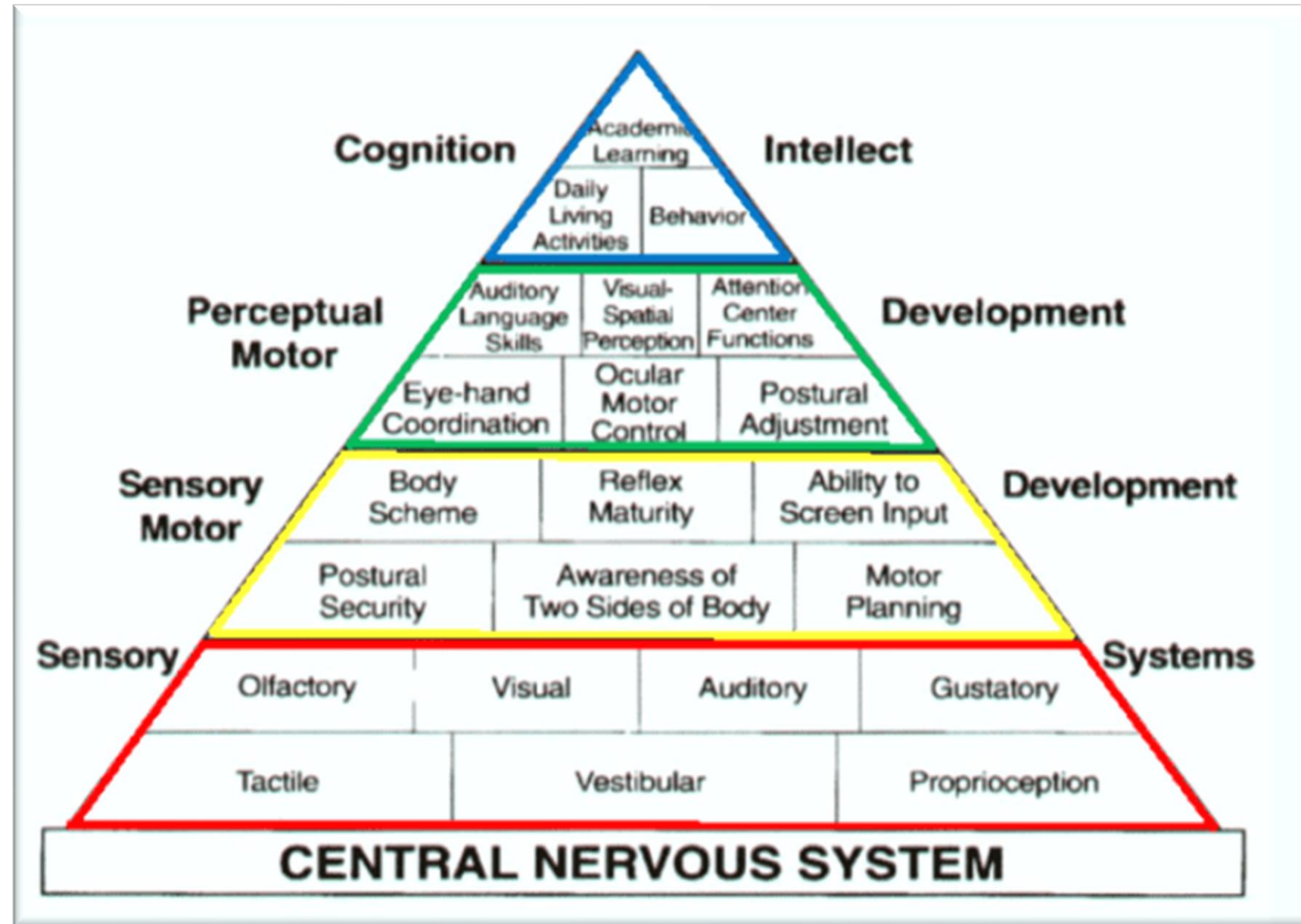


Why is it important to understand sensory processing?

- WE LIVE IN A MULTI-SENSORY WORLD. WE RARELY, IF EVER, ONLY RECEIVE SENSORY INFORMATION THROUGH ONE CHANNEL.
- EVERYTHING WE DO IS THE RESULT OF SOME FORM OF SENSORY EXPERIENCE.
- EVERYTHING WE DO GENERATES SOME FORM OF SENSORY EXPERIENCE.
- EVERY EXPERIENCE WE HAVE OR SITUATION WE FIND OURSELVES IN, EVERY SINGLE DAY, HAS MORE THAN ONE SENSORY ELEMENT TO IT.

Being able to integrate the information from all the different sensory pathways about an object, situation or activity is a significant part of our being able to learn, develop and function successfully in the world.

Wilbarger pyramid of learning:



- It is important to note that “there are no inherently *good* or *bad* sensory processing preferences. The context of the environment and the task at hand determine whether an individual’s sensory preferences are an advantage or a disadvantage.” (Dunn 2002 p.33)
- Motivation and interests can also play a significant role in how sensory preferences play out in activities.

WARNING:

Once you start seeing Sensory “stuff”, you see
it everywhere
and you can’t unsee it!

What exactly is Sensory Processing?

Sensory Processing is about how the nervous system perceives, organises, interprets and responds to sensory information coming from the environment and from your body, via the sensory pathways/senses.

It is about how your brain makes meaning from the information it receives.

In other words: We are talking about how the brain manages the information from the environment and from our bodies in order to make a response.

RESPONSE

A response is generated



SENSORY INPUT

Sensory receptors are stimulated.



PROCESSING

Sensory information is organised and interpreted, stored and related to

Our brains receive information from all the sensory channels all the time and make adjustments based on all that information, primarily to keep us safe but also to keep us happy.

- Our brains juggle the information, prioritise it, match it with previous inputs, organise it and trigger reactions as needed.
- That may be to do something **OR** to do nothing.

If there is a breakdown at any point, in any channel, the overall understanding we have of the situation will be distorted or incomplete.

Most of the time, most adults can recognise and manage any distortions/errors – or gaps - in incoming information so that their responses are appropriate.

Children are less able to do this.

Key points to understanding a child's reactions

We all respond to our image or perception of the world and the situation we are in. That image and interpretation is unique to us.

Children don't necessarily know that our perception is different to theirs. They may struggle to articulate their perception and will probably assume it is the same as ours.

As adults, we have experiences which inform our interpretation and allow us to “sense-check” our understanding of a situation. Children have less wealth of experience to be able to do that.

Key points to understanding a child's reactions

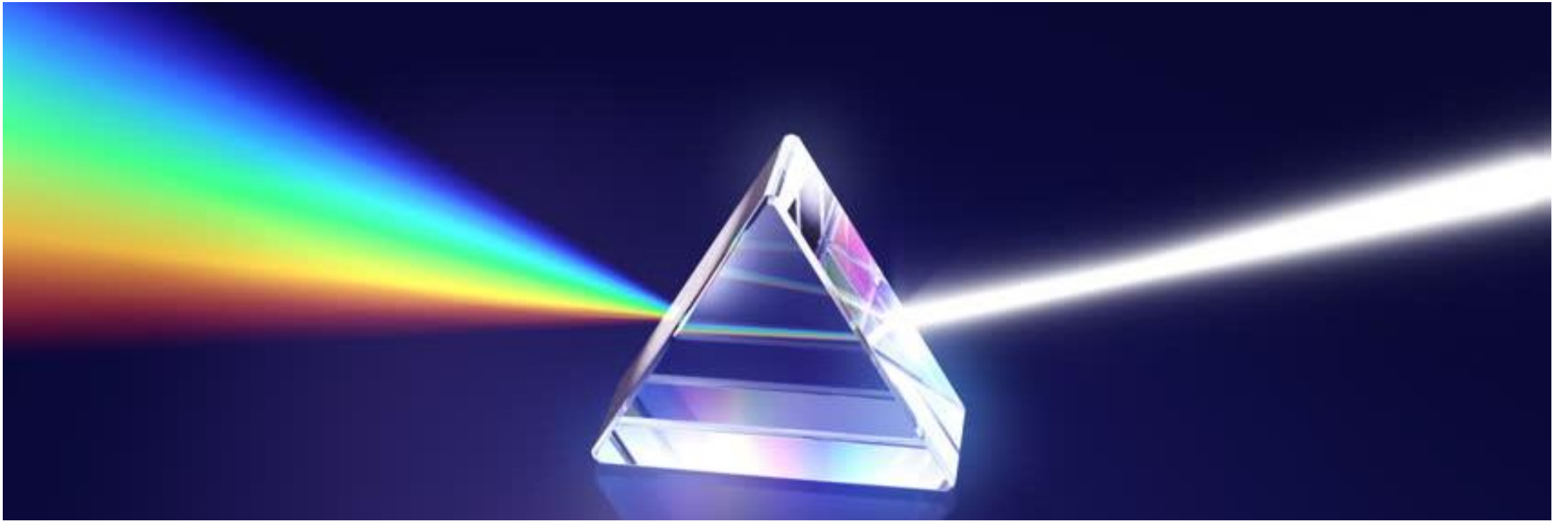
Some children are inherently less able to do that because they connect to the world in a different way. *Think autism and "Theory of mind".*

They don't necessarily read social cues and reactions well so are less able to check in with the reactions of the people around them to work out if their response is accurate.

For some children, what they are experiencing and perceiving in that moment in time is so overwhelming, unpleasant or scary that they are unable to check and moderate their responses based on what people around them are doing. They are already in fight or flight mode.

What they do in that moment is the physical expression of their response to:

- Their perception of the situation and activity based on the information their nervous system is receiving and
 - Their understanding and interpretation of that information.
-
- Adults may call it “behaviour”.
 - It is not “wrong” or “naughty” – it is their innate response.
 - It is not an active choice they are making – most of the time!



Sensory Rainbow

Visual
Processing

Auditory
Processing

Tactile
Processing

Oral sensory

Smell

Vestibular

Proprioception

Interoception

Strands of the rainbow

- **Visual Processing**

- This is about making meaning from the information we get from our visual pathway.
 - Colour: including shade and intensity of colour
 - Light and dark and intensity/brightness of light
 - Size and shape
 - Pattern
 - Depth perception: recognising how far away something is and/or how fast it is moving and in what direction – towards us or away from us.
 - Figure-ground perception: being able to find something in a busy background
 - Managing the number of stimuli competing for attention



Auditory processing

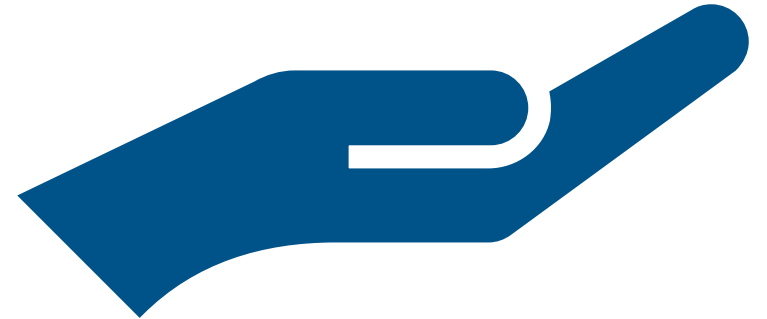
This is about making meaning from the information we get from our hearing pathway. It consists of these elements:

- Pitch/frequency
- Volume
- Intensity
- Filtering out the background noises to focus on the important ones
- Managing a number of different sound sources from different places

All of that happens before we try to decode language!

Our skin is our largest sensory organ and provides very detailed and complex information about our bodies and how it interacts with the environment.

- It is protective – enabling us to react quickly to changes in our very close environment to prevent harm and enable us to function safely.
- It can be our “eyes”. Our fingertips, in particular, are extremely sensitive and can tell us what we are holding, without us having to look at it.

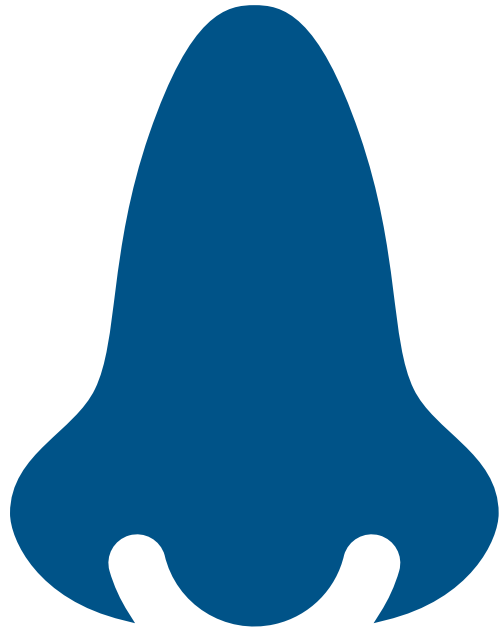


Touch consists of these elements:

- Texture
- Temperature
- Pain
- Light touch
- Deep Pressure

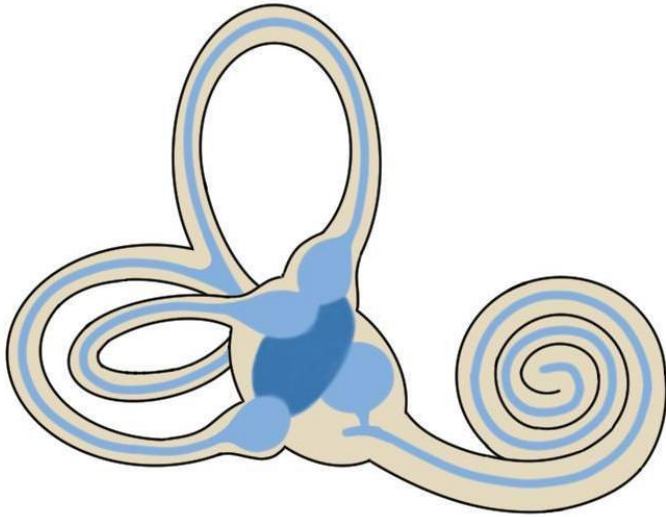


- **Oral Sensory Processing**
- This is a very complex sensory channel. It is an extension of our touch processing system. There are lots of receptors in and around our mouths, which makes this an incredibly powerful sensory area. It is also the hardest to influence.
- It includes:
 - Taste
 - Texture
 - Temperature



- Oral Sensory processing also includes smell.
- It is an “invisible” stimulus and so isn’t one that we automatically consider, but we should because it links strongly with memories and emotions, good and bad.
- It is sometimes our sense of smell that alerts us to someone having walked into a room – before we have seen or heard them. Most of the time, most of us don’t realise that.
- Smell can significantly impact on food preferences and choices.
- It can also affect who we like – or not, what places we like to be in – or not, what clothes we want to wear.

Vestibular Processing



- The sensors for this are in our inner ears and the trigger for them is a change in head position.
 - This is an incredibly important sense for helping us to work out where we are in the world – and therefore how we interact with the world and what we choose to do.
 - It helps us work out whether we are upside down or the right way up! Or even which way is up!
 - It tells us whether we are moving forward or backwards or going around in a circle.
 - It influences posture and balance
-
- It helps us to turn our heads to watch things around us and enables us to do things like tip our heads back just the right amount to drink the bottom half of a cup of tea.

•**Proprioception:**

The receptors for this are in our joints and muscles. They are triggered by movement and pressure.

- We need it to work out:

- Where we are in space

- How to get from one position to another

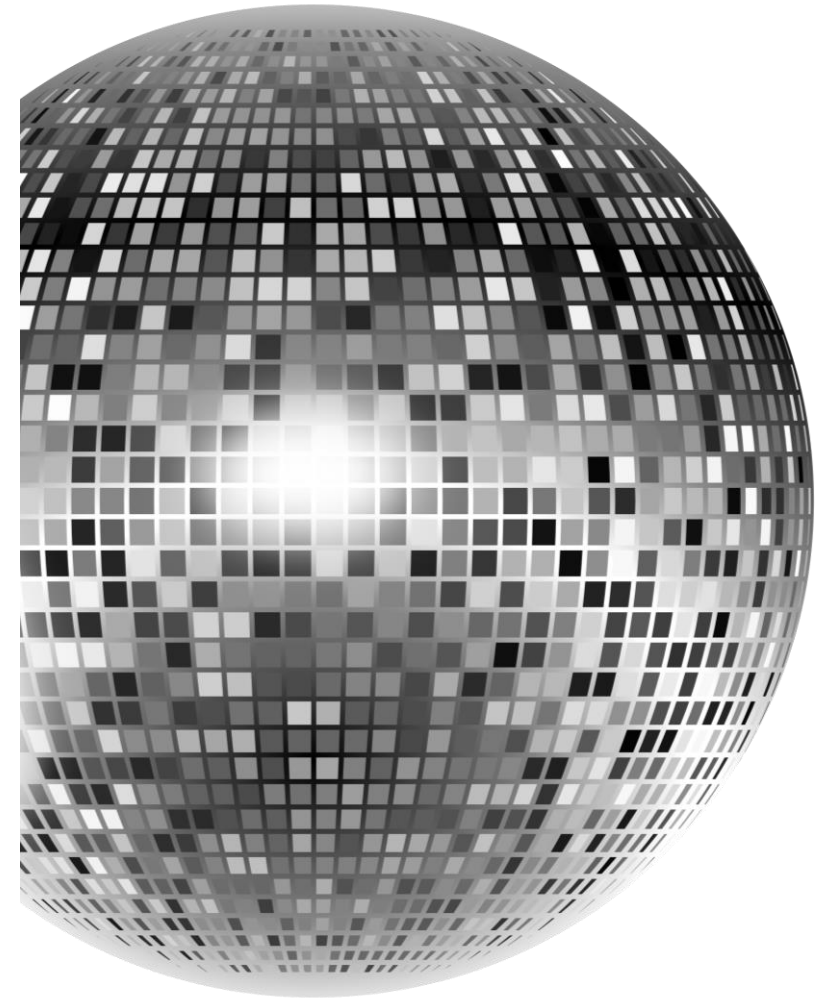
- How much force to use in and action

- In other words, we need it for motor planning and co-ordination, which impacts on everything we do, all day every day - from switching on a light switch in the dark, to fastening our buttons, to getting a forkful of food to our mouths without tipping the food off.

TOP TIP

Proprioceptive activity/feedback plays a big role in helping to keep us calm and “grounded”.

It is one we can use to help “regulate” a child – sometimes for non-sensory reasons.



- **Interoception:**

This is the new kid on the block in terms of understanding sensory processing.

- It is about recognising and interpreting signals from within your body – hunger, thirst, temperature, feeling sick, tiredness, toileting needs.
- There is increasing recognition that these things influence behaviour and that sometimes the behaviour we see and struggle to understand comes from “errors” in this system.
- It is also linked in the literature with recognising emotions / understanding feelings.

Activity 2



Thinking back to our sensory rainbow:

- Colours overlap and are not separable from each other. They are closely aligned.
- Depending on which angle you look at a rainbow from, different colours will be more apparent / dominant at different times.

BUT

- All the colours are there all the time. Otherwise, it isn't a fully-fledged rainbow.

The same is true with sensory processing.

The sensory systems don't exist in isolation, they are closely interlinked and dependent on each other for balance.

Sensitivity levels and preferences determine what that balance is, and it is individual for every person and may vary from situation to situation and day to day.

Patterns or preferences: Hypersensitivity

- The child/Young person might be highly sensitive or reactive to some kinds of stimulation. This means that:
- They will need very little sensory input through a particular channel or channels before it overwhelms them.
- Too much noise, too many lights and colours, too much movement can upset their feeling of calm.
- It might be **one** of the Sensory channels being overwhelmed or a combination of different channels that adds up to TOO MUCH.

What you may see:

The child zoning out/shutting down because they cannot cope.

An increase in the child's current favourite form of "stimming" as they try to calm themselves.

The child shutting their eyes and/or covering their ears and/or trying to run away/hide.

The child having a meltdown as the cry for help to get you to take them away from whatever has tipped the balance for them or to sit with them in it until they can calm enough to come out of their freeze reaction and move on.

Patterns or preferences: Undersensitivity

The child/young person might be under-sensitive to some kinds of stimulation. This means that:

- They need more of that particular kind of stimulation than another child of the same age and will seek it out.
- Alternatively, they appear to be very passive and need lots of input from people around them to get them interested in an activity and motivated.
- *These can be the hardest children to help – because they go largely “unnoticed” and when you do notice them, they need a lot of input to get a response.*

What you may see

They might have frenzied periods of activity followed by short spells of calm, before it starts again.

They are constantly making noise or on the go.

They seek out what appear to be “dangerous” experiences and “have no fear”.

They like falling and crashing and bumping into things

They like to be wrapped up in their bedding or have toys packed tightly around them in bed or find reasons to lean into people / furniture / walls.

**Synaesthesia*

Remember the rainbow and how all the colours are dependent on and interact with each other all the time?

Information from the sensory pathways are also dependent on each other and interact with each other all the time.

We all have our own individual sensory preferences and channels that we rely on more for information and/or find it easier to tune in to and decode.

This means that we all have a different “tint” to our processing and that is our “normal”.



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What tint is your light?



Why our “tint” becomes distorted

One of those colours is faded or completely missing or, in sensory terms, we aren't getting enough from one of the channels.

There is too much of a colour or it is too intense, the balance is wrong and again, the colour shifts. This is also known as becoming overwhelmed.

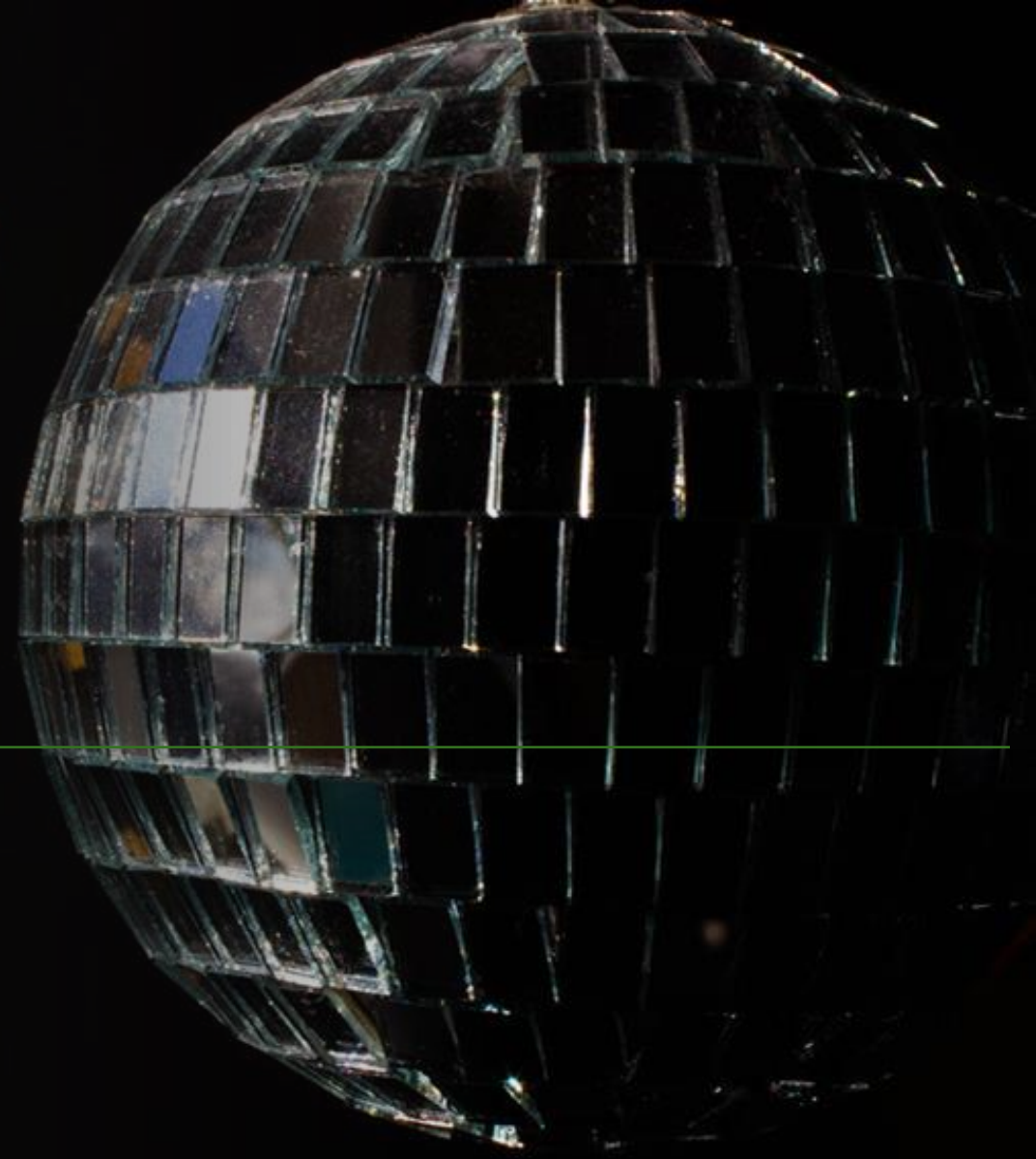


In order to work out how to make the light the right colour – or in sensory terms help us to feel regulated, we need to look at what has gone wrong in the colour mix going in and try and rectify that, either by increasing the amount of a colour or decreasing it i.e. through sensory seeking or sensory avoiding.

- This can create confusion for the child in terms of what to focus on first and what to respond to, particularly in a new /change of activity or situation.
- They will know that they are no longer their preferred shade and will start to do something / anything to “fix” it.
- Younger children may be less selective about what they do because they have less experience of knowing what works. They may not hit on the right thing straight away.
- In that instance, it is likely that an adult will intervene and may be able to help them find the right thing.
- They may find the right thing themselves because their environment is set up or their timetable/ routines are structured to help them to do that. It may also be that they are older and have “learned” what works for them.
- Sometimes they will find the right activity and it will feel good and they will get back to their particular colour but enjoy it so much that they keep on going and tip themselves the other way!
- * *24-hour sensory management*

- It can make it hard for a parent / carer or teacher to know what to do to help.
- Remember that it is really about balancing preferences.
- This can be through:
 - Managing the amount of input through one channel to create calm in other channels as it helps the whole system to rebalance.
 - *Managing can mean giving stimulation through a pathway, not just taking away stimulation.*

So what?
What do we do now?





We do not
see things as
they are, we
see things as
we are.

Anaïs Nin

Activity 3:



Understanding what the child's patterns and preferences are – meaning which sensory channels are over-sensitive and which are under sensitive - is the first step to helping them.

- Think about what the child likes to do, what they are good at and what helps to calm them when they are distressed.
- This will give insight into which sensory pathways are most user friendly for them, and which pathways give them the most reliable information.
- Use those channels wherever possible to help them cue in to what you need them to do.
- Recognise that *at least some* of what they are doing is in response to their sensory drives and is not a conscious choice or decision.
- Try and find times within the daily routine to do the activities that fulfil their sensory needs to increase the possibility at other times of getting their focus and attention for things you need them to do.

Communication:

This needs to be simple, clear and in a format that is easily accessible and understandable within the situation they are in. It also needs to take into account how overwhelmed – or underwhelmed - they are feeling.

- *Be aware of what other sounds there are in the environment that you are competing with. If your child has supersensitive hearing, those sounds may be exaggerated for them and/or they may be tuning in to things that you cannot hear.*
- *Remember that your child might be struggling to tune out all of those sounds in order listen to you.*
- *They may also be hearing sounds within their bodies which are distracting.*
- *They might not be aware that you are talking to them. Help them to tune in to you using another sensory pathway or a sound that contrasts with the general ambient noise.*
- ***The way you communicate with them might not be verbal.***



- Sometimes looking and listening at the same time is really hard.
- The instruction “Look at me so I know you are listening” can be very unhelpful, because the child then looks at you but anything you are saying goes by the wayside.
- All their energy is going into looking – and potentially being overwhelmed by the looking.
- Keep it short and in bullet points.
 - If you need to repeat the instruction, try and use the same wording you used the first time.
 - It’s not that they haven’t understood, they need processing time.
 - Rephrasing the instruction means that they start back at the beginning.
- Don’t just say the child’s name and wait for them to acknowledge you before you give an instruction.
 - That might not be how they operate socially.
 - Say their name and follow it up with an instruction.

Don't use figurative language or ambiguous language. Say what you mean.

Tell them what you do want them to do, not what you don't want them to do.

- They may not be able to come up with an alternative idea.
- They may also only hear the last part of what you said and missed the “Don't” that it started with.

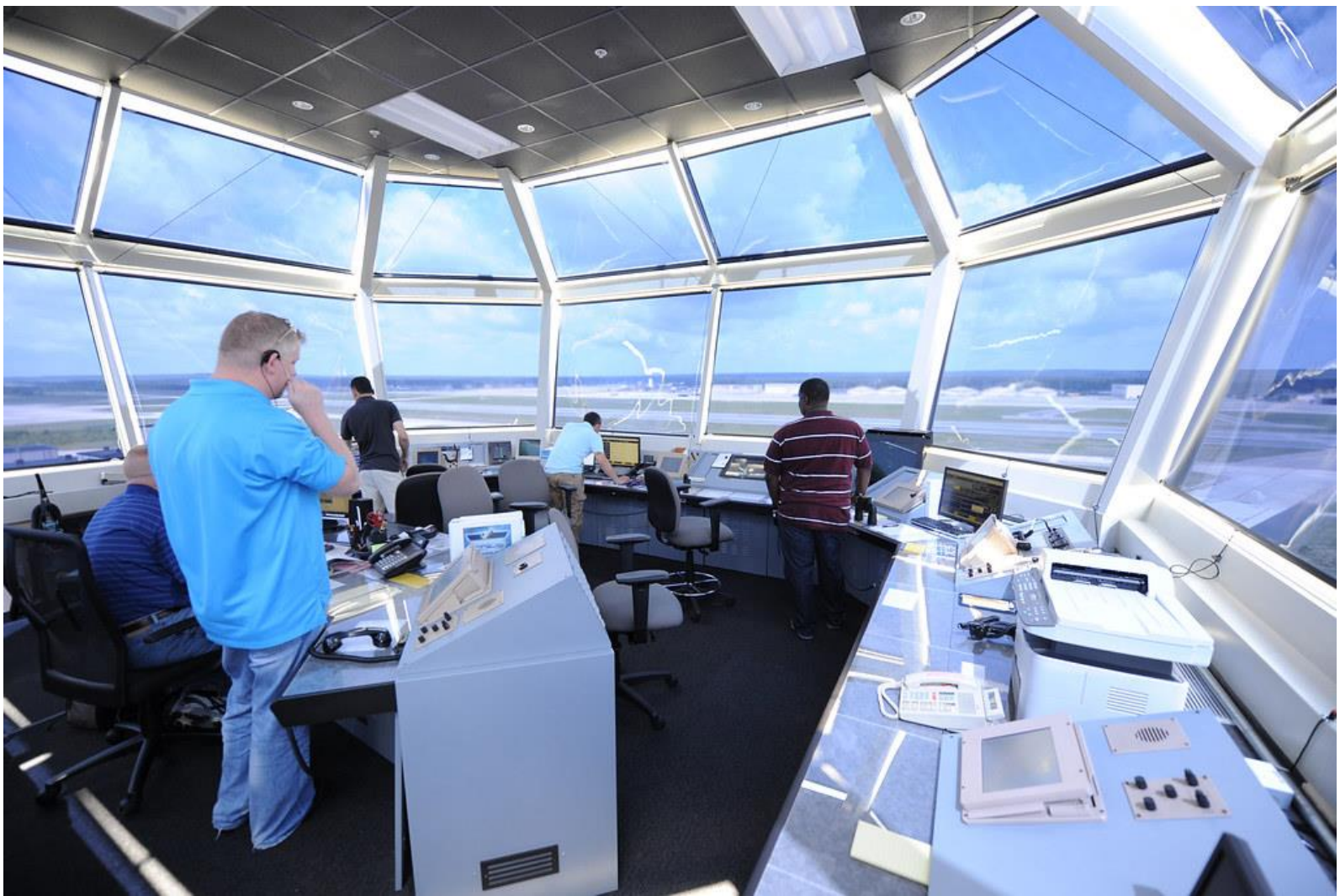
If the child is feeling overwhelmed, listening and processing language can become much harder for them.

- Sound waves are fleeting. Once the word has been said, it is gone. There is nothing left to help the child figure out meaning or remember the instructions.
- Talking tins / talking postcards
- Try using visual cues: pictures / symbols / photos / signs / gesture



Role of routines

- ROUTINES KEEP SITUATIONS PREDICTABLE. THEY SERVE A PURPOSE IN A CHILD'S SENSORY WORLD.
 - WHEN THINGS ARE PREDICTABLE AND FAMILIAR, THEY CARRY LESS SENSORY "LOAD" SO HAVE LESS INTENSITY.
 - IF THINGS ARE WHERE YOU EXPECT THEM TO BE YOU DON'T NOTICE THEM – SO THEY DON'T TAKE UP ANY SENSORY SPACE.
 - THEY ARE PERCEIVED AS LESS THREATENING, AND THE CHILD NEEDS TO USE LESS EFFORT TO REACH A PLACE OF FEELING SAFE AND SECURE.
 - IN OTHER WORDS, THEY ENABLE A CHILD TO PARTICIPATE AND FUNCTION IN THE WORLD AS THEY PERCEIVE AND UNDERSTAND IT.
-
- *AFTER SCHOOL MELTDOWNS



Going to new places/ transitions

- The opposite of routine is going into new places or doing new activities.
- This carries huge sensory load as every pathway must “check out” and manage all the new information it is getting from multiple directions and sources.
- Think of it as a power surge or rush hour in the air traffic control tower.
- There is a sudden influx of information through every channel, and it all needs to be registered, compared, prioritised and sorted into urgent or non-urgent in comparison to all the other information flooding in.
- It is when the short circuit aka meltdown is most likely to happen.
- This is particularly true if there is nothing inherent in the activity or the environment that meets/ fits with their sensory preferences.
- *Red Herring called motivation

Top tips

Try not to do more than one of these in a day.

Be aware that the child might hold it together while they are there, but there may well be a fall out later.

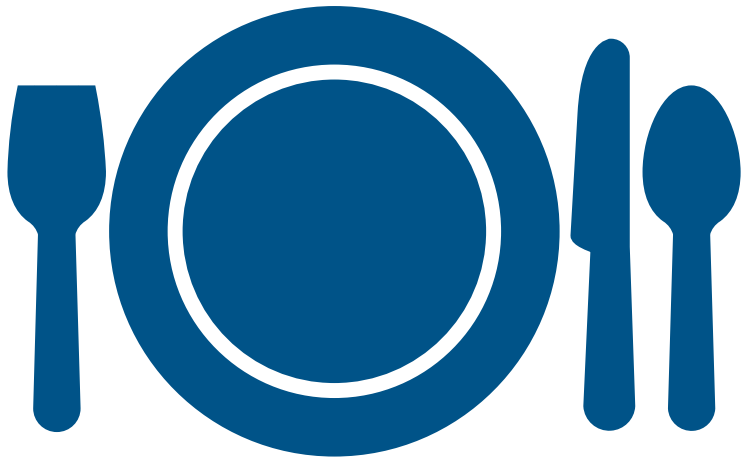
Try to be selective about when you do this and be aware of the sensory load and therefore the costs.

Plan ahead and think about what you could do to lessen the impact from a sensory point of view to improve the child's chances of success. What can you tap into?

Avoid using time statements where possible.

- **Mealtimes:**

- Mealtimes are just about the most heavily sensory-loaded activity we ask children to take part in.
 - We expect them to sit still at a table – which isn't helpful if they routinely need to move.
 - Often they are sitting on a chair with their feet dangling – so there is no support from their feet to help them keep their balance or to help them know where the floor is, that they are safe and which way is up.
 - The texture of the chair might be difficult to tolerate.
 - The food all carries a smell and may have competing smells if the child is super-sensitive to smell.
 - They need to sit near people who also smell.
 - They are assailed by the sounds of chewing, breathing, cutlery on plates, plates on tables, conversations...
 - They have to deal with what cutlery feels like in their hands – and may struggle to use cutlery!
 - There is the visual impact of table, plates, cutlery, placemats, tablecloth, people and their clothes, pictures on the walls, food on their plates and what that looks like.
- All before they have tried to put food in their mouths.



- Try:
 - Using plain plates with no patterns.
 - Get rid of tablecloths
 - Serve food away from the table to reduce clutter on the table
 - Make sure the child is sitting on a chair with their feet supported and at a good height to the table so that they are feeling secure and stable.
 - Allow them to eat in a different room if that is easier for them and means that they get the nutrition they need.

Bear in mind that there may have been a transition from classroom to dining hall and what impact that might have.

**Ask
yourself:**

- 1) What is the primary purpose of this activity?***
- 2) What do I need the child to get from this?***
- 3) What does the child need to get from this activity?***
- 4) Are those three things working together?***
- 5) What do I need to change about the activity or the situation to help those 3 things to work together?***



Challenge

A Bonkers Idea? Or maybe not so bonkers...

Luke Beardon's Golden Equation:

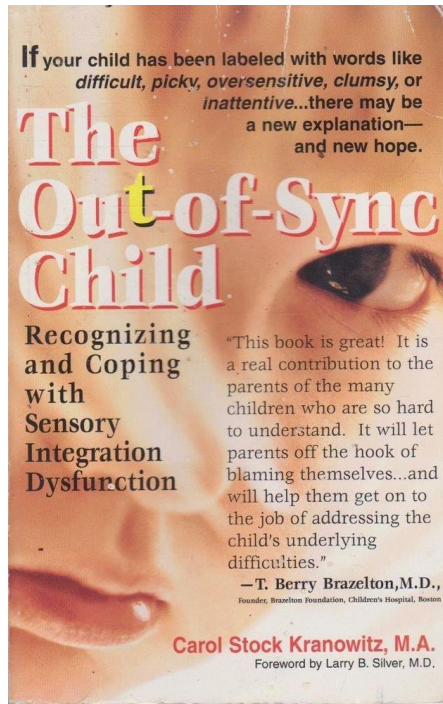
**AUTISM + ENVIRONMENT =
OUTCOME**



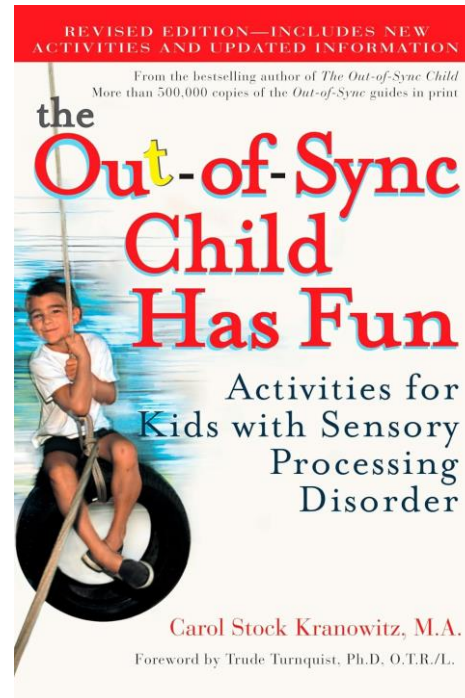
Thank You!

Michelle

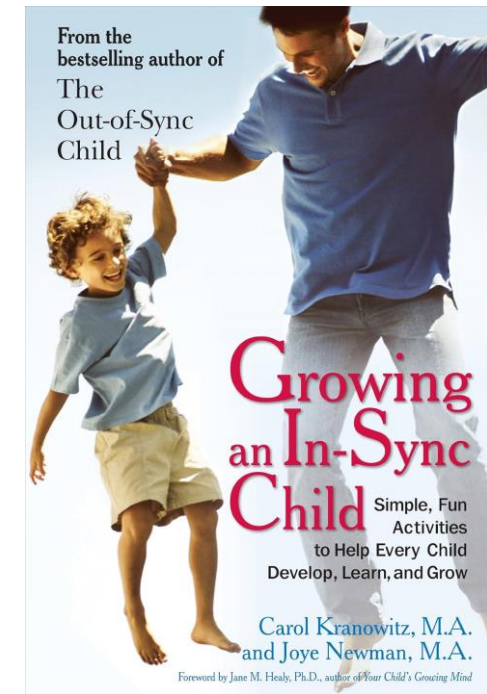
References/Resources:



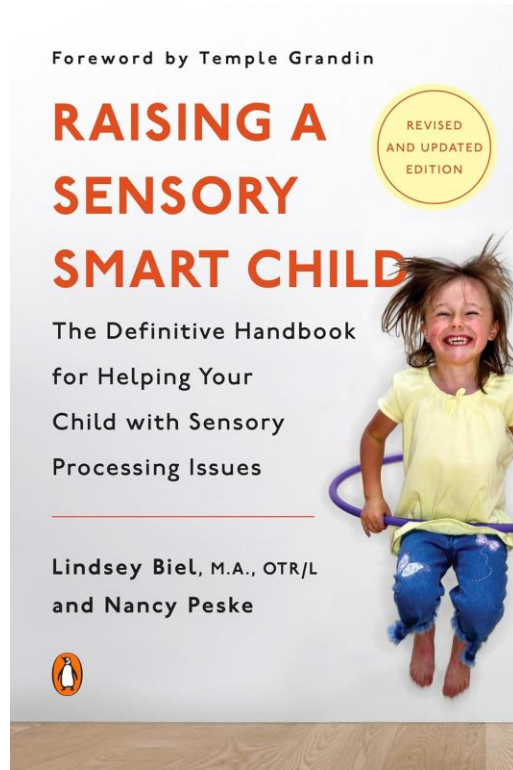
The out of sync child
Carol stock Kranowitz



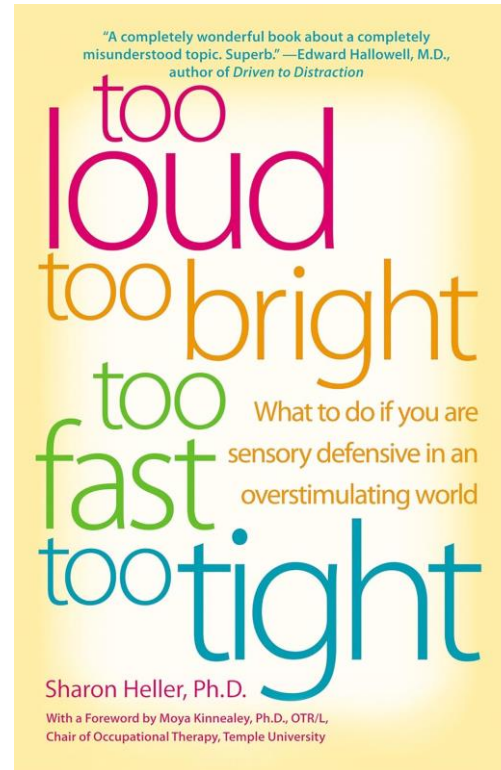
The out of Sync child as fun
Carol Stock Kranowitz



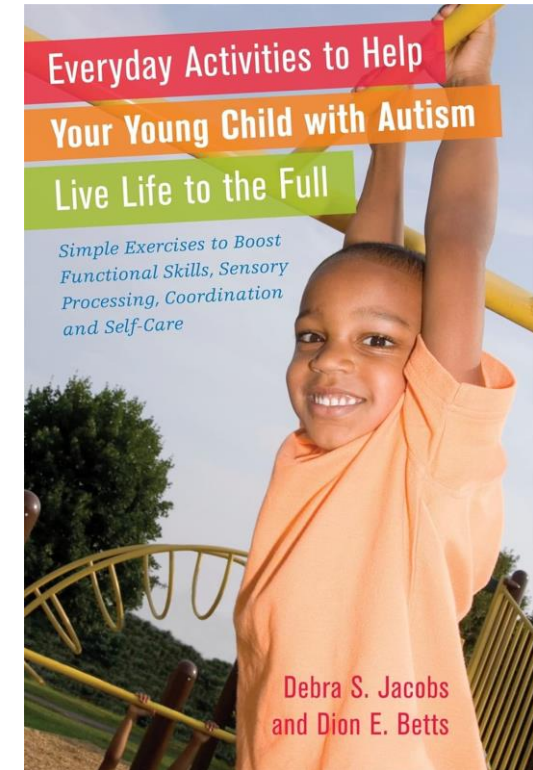
Growing an In Sync Child
Carol Kranowitz and Joye
NEwman



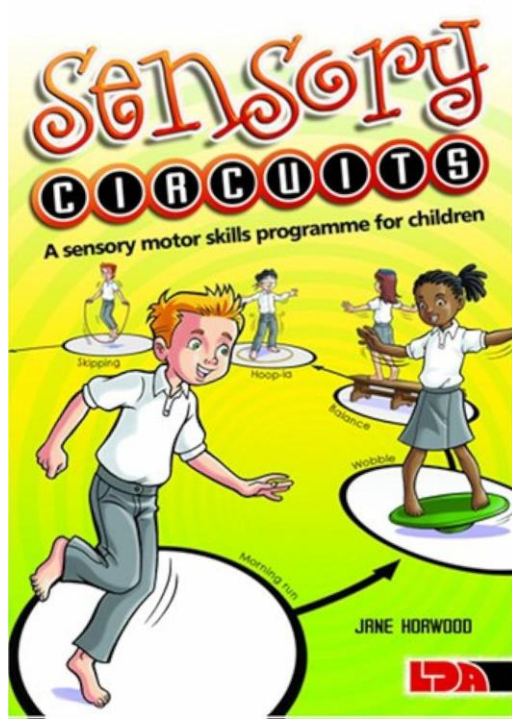
Raising a sensory smart child
Lindsey Biel and Nancy peske



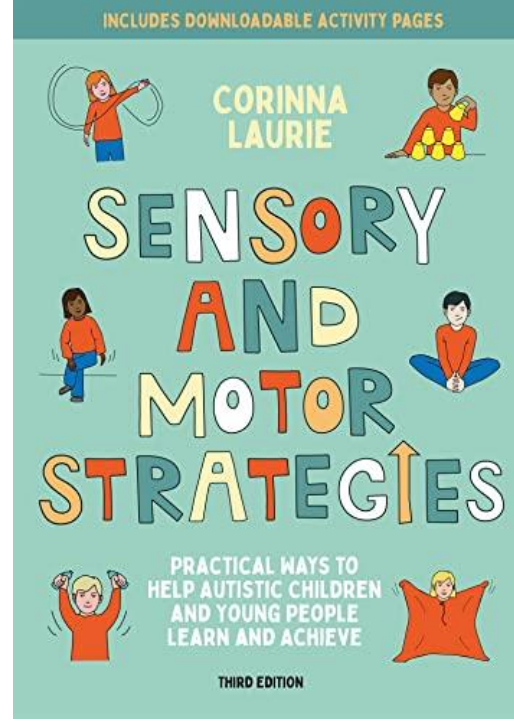
Too loud too bright too fast too
tight
Sharon heller



Everyday Activities to help your
young child with autism live life to
the full
Debra Jacobs and Dion Betts



Sensory Circuits
Jane Horwood



Sensory Strategies
Corinna Laurie



My brother is an astronaut
Michelle Rundle