

# Sensory Parenting

Mrs.R.Praveena<sup>1</sup>, Mrs.R.Prasanna<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M.Sc (Nursing) , Rani Meyyammai College of Nursing Annamalai University

<sup>2</sup> occupational Therapist, Rani Meyyammai College of Nursing Annamalai University.

**Abstract-** *Technology today has become an inseparable part of a child's life and it is not surprising to see a two year old child unlock mobile phones and hit the right links on touch screen gadgets. Every gadget in child hand will fascinate and leads to addiction issues and sensory deprivation in children of a very young age. Sensory Processing is the ability to register, discriminate, adapt and respond appropriately both physically and emotionally to sensory input from our bodies and the environment. A child's brain develops rapidly during the first five years of life especially the first three years. It is a time of rapid cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional and motor development. Sensory stimuli are processed at the level of brain stem and stimulating the child's motivation to make higher level adaptive responses and to tackle challenges in everyday life. So parents need to be aware of sensory system and should incorporate activities need for nurturing it with parenting skills. Sensory parenting includes all activities that stimulate young child's senses touch, smell, taste, movement, balance, sight and hearing. Parenting through senses facilitates exploration and naturally encourages children to use scientific processes while they play, create, investigate and explore. Community interventions should be focused in educating the mother in the community to activate the child's innate drive to engage and grow through pleasurable sensory-motor activities leading to increasingly more complex somatomotor adaptive responses.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Development is the interplay between genetics, health, physical capabilities, and environmental influences. Likewise, the child's capacity to process sensory information develops and is influenced by culture, environment, care giving and social support. As the child perceives, interprets, analyzes, integrate sensory information and gain knowledge about body and the environment. This forms an important basis for learning and development.

Vestibular, Proprioceptive and Interoceptive sense

We know the five traditional senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. In addition to these important senses there are three other senses the vestibular, proprioceptive sense and interoceptive are essential in registration and understand incoming information.

- The vestibular system receives information through the inner ear and processes information about movement, gravity, and balance. When the child goes down a slide, swing or performs a forward roll the vestibular system gives continuous feedback to child's brain.
- The proprioceptive system provides the brain with information as to where the muscles and joints are positioned in relation to the rest of the body. For example, when the child lifts something the child is able to perceive whether it is heavy or light. When child brings a spoon to his mouth or insert his arms through his coat sleeve the proprioceptive system constantly monitors the situation and provides feedback when correction is needed.
- The interoceptive system is made up of small receptors in our organs like muscles, skin, and bones. They gather and report information about the inside of our body to our brains. When our interoception is working properly, our brain helps organizes this information so that the child react appropriately to feeling physically or emotionally e.g. hunger, thirst, elimination, need for air, itch

## What Parents in the community can do to raise a sensory child

### Young infants: Sensory stimulation

Touch and movement is important for young infant to learn about the environment. Physical contact is particularly important not only for the sensation that it provides opportunity to enhance the parent-child relationship. A well intentioned parent may place an infant in an infant seat near the living room so that the baby can hear and see family activities. An alternative would be to spend a substantial amount of time in holding, rocking, or carrying the baby. Another aspect to consider is the variety body positions for playing, sleeping, and cuddling helps an infant to master gravity, movement, and body control. Sensory explorations are important to infant for establishing new neuronal pathways and strengthen the previously established pathway in the brain.

1. One way of connecting with infants during routines is to use simple massage technique.
- 2.

- i. Take a deep breath and relax yourself.
  - ii. Then hold the infant's hand gently with your thumbs, moving them up the center of the infant palm and out along the base of the fingers.
  - iii. Go slowly and note the infant's reaction and continue as long as the infant seems to be enjoying the activity
  - iv. Do both hands and then massaging the feet.
  - v. Introduce singing or music to the activity.
  - vi. Foot massage follows the same pattern. Using the thumbs press gently up the center of the infant's sole and out the base of the toe.
2. Consider choosing toys that engage specific senses such as a chime bell, ball, soft
    - a. toy, hard box or vibrating toys and rattles.
  3. Help to explore and examines an object using both hands and amount of force needed to pick up different objects.
  4. Observe whether the child focuses on objects either near or far.
  5. Provide assistance in investigating shapes, sizes, and textures of toys.
  6. Explore environment from a variety of positions i.e. while lying on back, sitting, crawling and standing with assistance.

## II. TODDLER

### Be Sensitive to Your Child's Reactions to Activities

It's important to recognize and understand how the child perceives different experiences. While light touch may be pleasing to some children for other child it may be irritating. It is important to recognize the child's reactions to certain situations and parent should be able to respond effectively to the child's needs and to help the child cope by either adapting or avoiding certain situations. For example, children who are irritated by light touch often respond positively to firm touch or deeper pressure. This is why hugging is calming to most children.

### Recognize Your Child's Activities

Consider the demands placed on a child to process sensation and respond to it. A child who enjoys movement and who has a good balance may be able to carry on vivid, imaginative conversations while swinging. A child who is fearful of movement, however, may need to concentrate intensely just to maintain balance. Remember that one child may not process sensory information or respond to it as automatically as another child.

### Look For Clues from Child

Children often seek the types of sensory experience their nervous systems need. If a child appears to be looking for sensory input try to provide some of these sensations in normal play activities. For example, if a child seems to want a lot of hugging and firm pressure, parent might encourage games like tug-o-war, neighbourhood hiking with weighted back packs, rolling games, hide-and-seek under large pillows or foam mattresses those activities that provide deep proprioception.

### Foster the Spirit of socialization

All children go through definitive phases of social development. The young child plays alone quite happily, babbling to himself and occasionally sharing a treasure with mother or father. Next comes the period when a child is able to play with one other child and this includes an element of adjustment to the idea of sharing. Eventually the group grows larger to three or four and by the time the child enters kindergarten the child is able to join and enjoy group experiences. There are times when a parent must reach out for help in socialization. It is generally the mother, who faces with this assignment to select a child from the neighborhood to make an appropriate playmate. At this age and under these circumstances boys and girls play equally well together.

### Sensory activities

1. Water play
2. Sand play
3. Roll out dough with a rolling pin
4. Use a little coffee straw or a narrower straw to drink water or juice

5. Give the child to eat something with interesting texture: chewy, crunchy ,silky or smooth
6. Feed the child with food of different taste and Ask questions like, “Which food here taste salty? Which one is sweet?”
7. Use a little coffee straw to drink water or juice
8. Car or dolly wash: Make the kids grab a few of their toy cars or dolls and put soap in the bathroom sink. Use rags or sponges to give the toys a bath.
9. Sponges- Get out bowls and a sponge to transfer water from one bowl to the other- lots of good squeezing. Add soap for bubbles
10. Take out the spice jars and smell ‘em! and let your child smell the vanilla, lemon, garlic etc that you are cooking with.
11. Encourage to crawl through the tunnel. They could also be a tree or a mountain
12. swing or a merry go round to organize their body when they move

### III.SENSORY ACTIVITIES FOR PRESCHOOLER

#### Involve Your Child in daily Activities:

The brain physiology that is involved in active movement, responses, and behavior is different than that of passive activities. Active involvement provides the best opportunity for changes in the brain that lead to growth, learning, and better organization of behavior. When a child is actively involved has more control over the situation. A passive activity may provide sensation or movement that does not necessarily require a response. Therefore, when planning new sensory and movement experiences it is usually best to emphasize active participation on the part of the child.

#### Restrict the time spent in television and electronic gadgets

Time spent watching television takes away from important activities such as reading, school work, playing, exercise, family interaction and social development. Discourage watching television more than 2 hours per day. Henry H (2017) stated that smart phones and related mobile technologies are recognized as flexible and powerful a tool that is used prudently. Smart phones can augment human cognition and have a negative and lasting impact on child ability to think, remember, pay attention, and regulate emotion. Dr Gaby Badre (2008) found children who used their cell phones extensively experienced more sleep disruption, restlessness and fatigue than children who limited their cell phone usage. Encourage more interactive activities such as

talking, playing, singing, and reading together to enhance sensory development of the child.

#### Emotional development

Many children have high level of cognitive and good motor development but are delayed emotionally. Consider a situation of laughing when his/her friend falls. The parents should teach the child to empathize with peers and ask if he/she is alright.

#### Encourage self-regulation

Self-regulation is “the capacity to control one’s impulses both to stop doing something and to start doing something ” (Bodrova & Leong 2005, 32). In Tools of the Mind: The Vygotskian Approach to Early Childhood Education, Bodrova and Leong (2007) assert that self-regulation, which includes controlling one’s impulses and delaying gratification, is a foundation for learning. Therefore, it is important that children learn self-regulation at an early age.

#### Activities

1. Foster Sense of sharing among peer
2. Provide opportunity to try to solve their problem through discussion
3. Encourage Playing team games
- 4 .Parents should provide opportunity to increase communication and interaction among the neighbours and elders.

#### Red flags

Mothers in the community should recognize sensory activities and raise red flags to alleviate sensory issues by consulting with the paediatrician or therapist

Hyper-Sensory Red Flags • Poor Balance Coordination • May notice sounds that no one else if picking up on • Fearful of surprise hugs or touches • May avoid messy play • Fearful of Playground equipment • May become very upset at diaper change time or when diaper needs changed

Hypo-Sensory Red Flags • Thrill Seeker • High Pain Tolerance • Doesn’t understand personal space • May be very

fidgety & unable to sit still for long • May mouth objects excessively • Seeks out messy play

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In general it is easy to train the senses in younger than older because as age increases the emotional, physical and cognitive components are tightly woven and it is more difficult to identify the sensory issue. School years are easy when the child senses are happy. With creativity the parents can do a “sensory activity” anywhere throughout the day for a more even keeled child. Finally, never underestimate the value of a good hug for every sense.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Ayres, A.J. 2005. *Sensory Integration and the Child: Understanding Hidden Sensory Challenges*, 25th anniversary edition. Los Angeles: Western Psychological Services.
- [2] Henry H. Wilmer et al (2017) *Smart phones and Cognition: A Review of Research Exploring the Links between Mobile Technology Habits and Cognitive Functioning* Published online 2017 Apr 25.
- [3] American Academy of Pediatrics. *Sensory integration therapies for children with developmental and behavioral disorders*. 2012. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/6/1186.long/>. Accessed February 2015.
- [4] American Occupational Therapy Association. *Roles and functions of the occupational therapist in the treatment of sensory integrative dysfunction*. Official position paper. *Am J Occup Ther*. 1982;36(12):832-834. <http://ajot.aota.org>. Accessed February 2015
- [5] Susanne Smith Roley, *Understanding Ayres' Sensory Integration*, occupational therapist faculty publications (2007)
- [6] Bodrova, E., & D.J. Leong. 2005. “Self-Regulation: A Foundation for Early Learning.” *Principal* 85 (1): 30–35. [www.naesp.org/resources/2/Principal/2005/S-Op30.pdf](http://www.naesp.org/resources/2/Principal/2005/S-Op30.pdf).
- [7] Dunn, W. 2008. *Living Sentionally: Understanding Your Senses*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley