

Module 2.6 Supporting Sensory Motor Issues in the Classroom

Sensory-Motor Key Concepts

- Important considerations
 - Two functions and two aspects
 - ❖ Over and under sensory issues
 - ❖ Consult with OT/PT for expert guidance
 - ❖ Parietal lobe, cerebellum, motor strip brain areas
- Two distinct but integrated functions
- Sensory entails information that is processed and used from our senses
- Motor skills entail movement, muscle tone, balance, posture, visual tracking
- Humans must regulate senses and motor functions to engage in their learning environment. S/M functions support our perceptions

An Important View

- Sensory and motor development is the process whereby a child gains use and coordination of his/her muscles of the trunk, arms, legs, and hands (motor development), and begins to experience, through sensory input, the environment by sight, sounds, smell, taste and hearing
- Sensory/motor functions and processes can be complex and multifaceted. Includes, balance, fine motor, gross motor, proprioception and other issues related to the senses

Impact on Learning

- S/M difficulties distract from learning situations by interfering with attention, sustained focus, and ability to efficiently process information (encoding information)
- Sensory dysregulation can impact social/emotional development and the opportunities to form social relationships
- Motor issues can impact handwriting, visual-perceptual issues, balance, eye-tracking, and navigating one's environment

Expert Guidance

- S/M issues respond well to interventions, and some can be remediated to a degree
- Most team members will consult with OT/PT and not engage in direct interventions like the OT/PT
- Team members typically engage in monitoring accommodations and skills taught by OT/PT

Intervention

- Skill building and remediation of S/M will largely take place with the OT/PT. Follow OT/PT recommendations
- Staff should be mindful of students' needs-over or under-stimulation issues. Support by maintaining environmental needs

Accommodations

- Very wide and varied needs
 - Only a few general strategies can be provided
 - Must be OT/PT supervised and approved
- Environmental Strategies
 - Set up an environment for success based on student's sensory needs-more or less inputs
 - Develop an individualized sensory diet menu with ideas from the student and OT/PT
 - Provide metacognitive strategies
 - ❖ "Why" a student may need specific accommodations, teach benefits
 - Teach self-advocacy related to environmental accommodations
 - Material presentation needs
 - Motor- issue needs that impact writing
 - ❖ Voice to text
- Accommodations for Under-Stimulation
 - Be mindful that students may need more sounds, light, background noise, fidgets, tactile stimulation
 - Need for movement
 - ❖ May be a moderate amount but also can be significant
 - ❖ Build a routine/schedule for movement breaks
 - ❖ Routines and well-structured environments work for all students
- Accommodations for Over-Stimulated
 - Low lights, noise, movements, visuals
 - Test presentation-mindful of too much information on page-limit visual inputs
 - Planned quiet breaks/sensory room
 - Mediations-emerging research and acceptance in expert community