

Sensory Integration: Recognizing and Responding to Young Children with Sensory Issues

Thursday, December 10, 2015



Presented by
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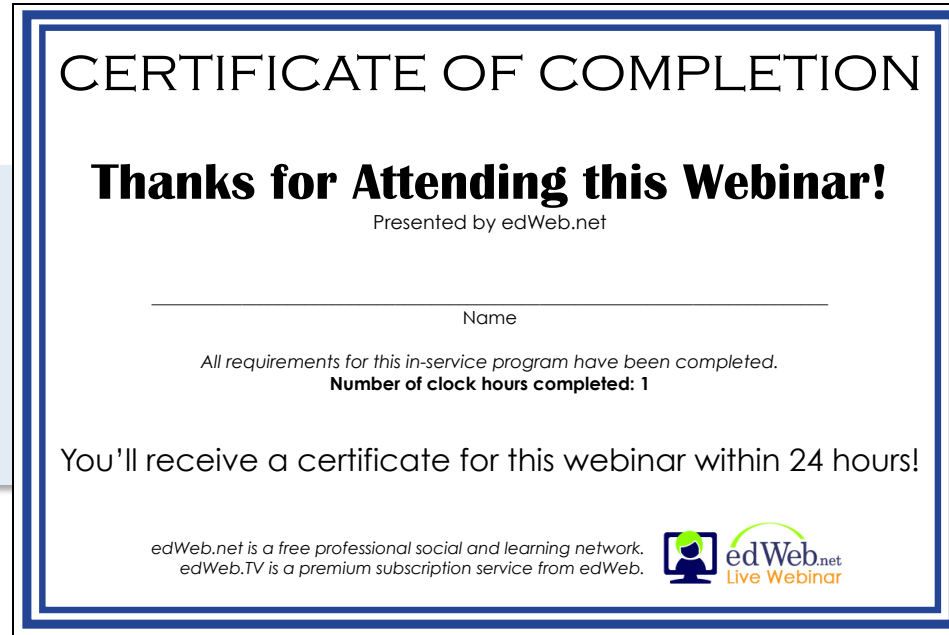
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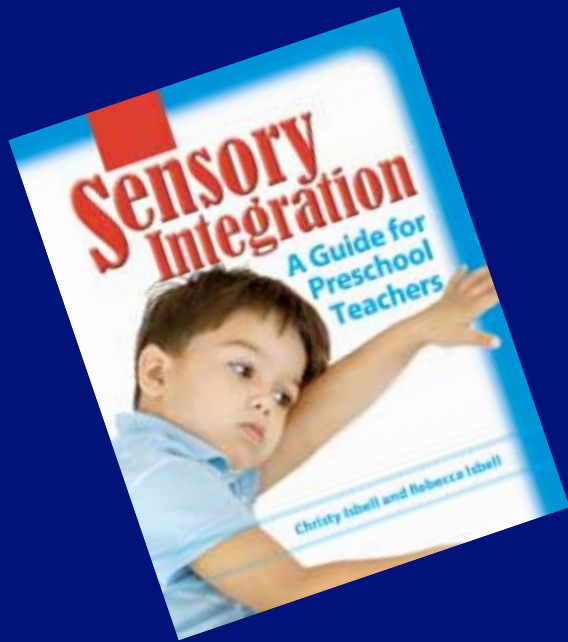


Sensory Integration: Recognizing and Responding to Young Children with Sensory Issues

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Information for this Webinar taken from:

Isbell, C. & Isbell, R. (2007). *Sensory Integration for Preschool Teachers*. Baltimore, MD: Gryphon House.

Available at www.ghbooks.com or
www.amazon.com

What is Sensory Integration?

- Neurological process of organizing sensory inputs for function in daily life.
- Brain takes in sensory information and sends signals to the body as to how to respond.
- How many senses are there???

SEVEN!!!

- Vision
- Auditory
- Tactile
- Taste
- Smell
- Vestibular
(Movement and Balance)
- Proprioception
(Body position)



What is Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)?

- A neurological problem with Sensory Integration
- Person is unable to respond effectively to sensory inputs (from one or more of the 7 senses)
- Daily life activities are impacted
- www.SPDFoundation.net

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) vs. “typical” sensory problems

- All of us have little sensory problems.
- A person whose sensory deficits cause him to be unable to function in daily life, has a SPD.

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)

- >1 in 20 children has a SPD
- > 90% of children with Autism have SPD
- Exact cause is unknown
 - Environment
 - Genetics

Young Children must be able to coordinate all 7 senses to learn about their world and function effectively.



SPD may be related to problems with learning, motor development or behavior

- Coordination problems
- Poor attention span
- Academic-related problems: handwriting or cutting with scissors
- Unusually high or low activity level
- Problems with self-care: tying shoes, zipping, buttoning, feeding
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social interaction
- Oversensitivity to touch, sights or sounds

2 Categories of Sensory Processing Disorder (most recognizable by teachers)

- Sensory Avoiders:
 - **RESPOND TOO MUCH!**
- Sensory Seekers:
 - *Crave More and More*



Sensory Avoiders (sensory system responds TOO MUCH...so avoids input)



- Over-responsive to sensations from one or more sensory system.
- Child may be over-aroused and respond to certain sensory input as if it were irritating or painful.

Sensory Avoiders

- Children may avoid one or more of the 7 sensations:

- Vision
- Auditory
- Vestibular
- Tactile
- Proprioception
- Taste/Smell



Sensory Avoiders



- May be overly aggressive or forceful in response to sensations.
- May react with inappropriate behaviors such as hitting, biting, kicking.
- May be passive and try to get away from objects or activities that are frightening.
- May “talk their way out of” activity that is over-stimulating.

Sensory Seekers (sensory system craves more and more input)

- Craves excessive stimulation from one or more of the sensory systems.
- Child seeks more stimulation than other children.
- Child never seems to be satisfied.



Sensory Seekers



- Children may seek one or more of the 7 sensations:
 - Vision
 - Auditory
 - Vestibular
 - Tactile
 - Proprioception
 - Taste/Smell

Some children are Seekers and Avoiders



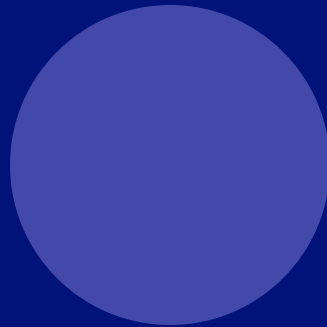
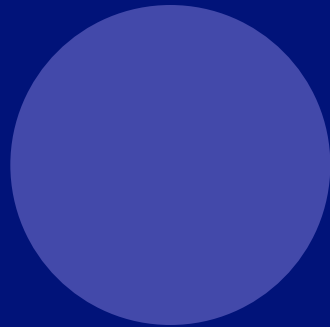
- It is not uncommon for a child with SPD to be a Seeker of one type of sensation and an Avoider of another sensory input.
- Ex. Vestibular Seeker and Tactile Avoider
- Can NOT avoid and seek the same sensation.

Red Flags for Most Common Sensory Seeker and Sensory Avoider

REMEMBER:

- No child will have every symptom.
- Sensory processing can vary from day to day or moment to moment.
- Child will probably have difficulty with more than one input.
- No two children are alike.

2 Most Common Sensory Processing Disorders (SPD) and Practical Solutions



Vestibular Seeker
Tactile Avoider



Vestibular (Movement and Balance) Seeker



- Brain says “GIVE ME MORE” movement!
- Child craves and seeks more movement than typical children

Red Flags

A Vestibular Seeker may:

- Be unable to sit still
- Be in constant motion
 - Ex. swaying, bouncing, fidgeting, wiggling, or pacing
- Take safety risks
- Be impulsive
- Run instead of walk
- Look like a child who has ADHD

Tactile Avoiders (Tactile Defensiveness)

- Most common type of Sensory Avoidance
- Brain says “Ouch” to everyday touch experiences



Red Flags

A Tactile Avoider may:

- ⦿ Respond to light or unexpected touch in negative manner or with excessive emotions i.e. hitting, biting, crying, screaming or running away.
- ⦿ Avoid messy experiences.
- ⦿ Be an Extremely Picky eater.
- ⦿ Refuse to hold hands with someone else.
- ⦿ Not like to be kissed or hugged.

What can you do? Role of Teacher

- Prevent Problems: Be SENSORY Aware!
- Respect child's emotions
- First consider changing the environment (sensory inputs)

Practical Solutions for Vestibular Seeker:

- Provide more movement experiences throughout day
- Large motor activity **INSIDE** or **OUTSIDE**
 - At least One hour a day!
 - You can break this up.



Practical Solutions for Vestibular Seeker

- Alternate active and quiet learning activities
- Center-based Environment



Practical Solutions for Vestibular Seeker

Standing



Rocking chairs, pillows, ball seats



Practical Solutions for Tactile Avoiders:

- Do not force child to touch!
- Tell the child before a touch is going to occur
- Prevent unexpected touches when possible
 - Line leader or follower
 - Sit next to adult



Practical Solutions for Tactile Avoiders

- Allow child to initiate the touch
- Look for other ways to participate in learning opportunity
 - Use tools
 - Watch first! Touch later



Create a Quiet Center

Child to go when overwhelmed by sensory input



When to refer:

- Early Diagnosis and Intervention is important!
- Talk with parents- share observations.

- If your observations reveal characteristics suggesting SPD, the child should receive a thorough evaluation by someone trained in the identification of SPD.

Professionals who can assist:

- Pediatric Occupational Therapist (OT)
- Pediatrician or Developmental Pediatrician
- Child Clinical Psychologist
- Local School System (special ed services)
- Child Find Program

Question & Answer Session

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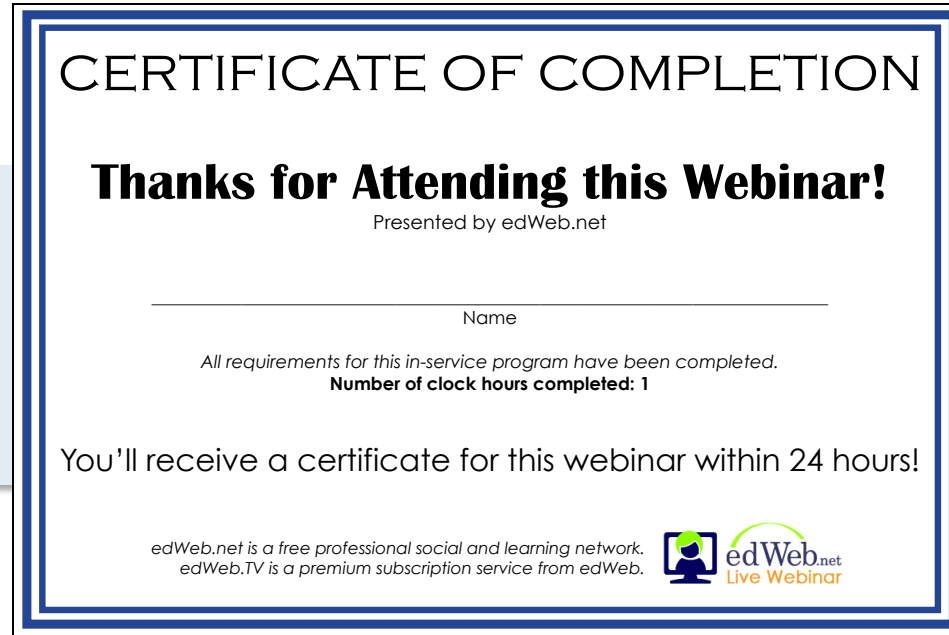
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