

## New Perspectives on Infant and Toddler Behaviors: A Sensory Integrative Approach

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## Objectives

- Understand infant/toddler behaviors from Sensory Integration perspective
- Learn how Sensory Integration relates to Self-Regulation
- Gain solutions for addressing challenging infant/toddler behaviors

## Self-Regulation

- Contributes to a child's ability to learn how to manage his or her own:
  - Attention
  - Behavior
  - Social skills
- Life-skill related to how we interact with others
- An Executive Functioning Skill



## Self-Regulation

- Predicts school success over and above cognitive skills and family background
  - (Bredekamp)
- Starts developing in the infant/toddler years



## Relationship between Sensory Integration and Self-Regulation and Behavior

- Some children easily develop self-regulation
- Some children have difficulty with self-regulation of behavior
- Self-Regulatory problems found in young children with:
  - Autism
  - Sensory Processing Disorder
  - Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)
  - ADHD

## Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)

- Infant is born addicted to the drug his/her mother was taking prior to birth.
- Drugs that can lead to NAS:
  - Codeine and hydrocodone
  - Morphine
  - Oxycodone
  - Heroin
  - Antidepressants
  - Benzodiazepines
  - Buprenorphine



## What does NAS Look Like?

- Excessive high-pitched crying
- Less sleep than normal
- Taking more than 20min to feed
- Sweating
- Twitching
- Projectile vomiting
- Loose/watery stool
- Red and white patches on the skin
- Delayed Development



<http://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/baby-conditions/>  
1:38-1:52

## Why is the child demonstrating a challenging behavior? A Sensory Integration Perspective

### Sensory Influence on Behavior/Self-Regulation

Consider

Is Child Seeking Sensory Input?

OR

Is Child Avoiding Sensory Input?

## Sensory Avoiders (sensory system responds too much...so child avoids input)



- Over-responsive to sensations from one or more sensory system.
- Responds to certain sensory input as if it were irritating or painful.
- Fight
- Flight
- Freeze

## Sensory Seekers (sensory system craves more and more input...so child seeks)

- Craves excessive stimulation from one or more of the sensory systems.
- Child just can't get enough sensory input.
- May seem to have ADHD.

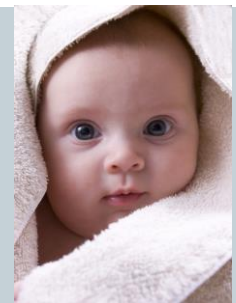


## A Child can learn to Self-Regulate

- **OBSERVE** the young child's behavior
  - Seeking Sensory Input?
  - Avoiding Sensory Input?
- Provide opportunities for young child to **LEARN** and **USE** appropriate responses
  - Teach to Use Words or Actions appropriately

## We use Sensory Integration methods to impact Self-Regulation/Behavior

- Rocking
- Patting
- Swaddling
- Quiet voice
- Shushing



## An Intentional Teacher will Help Infants/Toddlers Learn Self-Regulation

Design an Environment that is

### **Sensory Smart!**

Provide external organization/structure

And

Use developmentally appropriate interactions

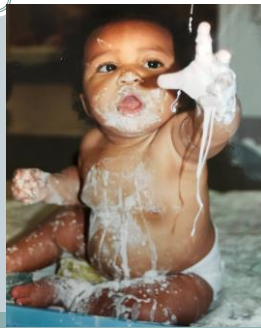
## Auditory Environment

- White noise machine
- Fan
- Away from doors/walkways



## Tactile Environment

- Offer variety of textures
  - ONE at a time
  - Several times (repetition)
- Do NOT force to touch



## Tactile Environment

- Small spaces
- Comfortable
- Soft



## Vestibular and Proprioception (Movement and Balance) Environment for Infants

- Floor Time
- Tummy Time
- Limited Containers (No more than 30 minutes awake time during day)



## Vestibular and Proprioception (Movement and Balance) Environment for Toddlers

- Center-based Environment
- Movement throughout the day INSIDE AND OUTSIDE



## Challenging Behaviors

### ADDRESSED FROM A SENSORY INTEGRATION (SI) PERSPECTIVE

## Challenging Infant Behavior: Difficulty Sleeping

- White Noise Machine
- Dark Area of Room
- Natural lighting
- Firm Pats on Back
- Rhythmical Rocking
- Swaddling?



## Challenging Infant Behavior: Poor Feeding

- Decrease Environmental Stimuli-
- No talking/singing
- Turn down lights
- Swaddle
- Rhythmical Rocking (1 rock per second)
- Hold head erect
- Stop feeding at 30 minutes



## Challenging Toddler Behavior: Biting

- Teething toys
- Chewelry
- Feed chewy or crunchy foods ( Ex. Bagels, raisins, cheese blocks, cereal, pretzels)
- Give deep pressure on upper lip
- Wash face with warm wash cloth and deep pressure
- Electric toothbrush



## Challenging Toddler Behavior: Over-activity

- Follow Developmentally Appropriate Practice
- Toddlers need movement throughout day
- Sit on pillows at circle
- Movement with Books/Songs at circle
- Stand to do fine motor activities



## Challenging Toddler Behavior: Aggressiveness

- Ex. Pushing, squeezing, pinching, hitting
- Heavy Work Activities Ex. Pushing objects, carrying objects, jumping, climbing, rolling
- Other Deep Pressure ideas:
  - Bear Hugs
  - Firm Back Massages
  - Squeeze hands in your hands
  - Roll the child in quilt or blankets



## MINDFUL BREATHING for Self-Regulation For You and For Young Child

- Needed to Calm and Focus Mind and Body
- Deep Breaths: In through nose/out through mouth-  
“Smell the flowers”
- Bunny Breaths
- Snake Breaths
- Elephant Breaths
- Lion roars
- 4 counts in/hold/4 counts out- Do cycle 4 times

## Quiet Place Center

- Provides Toddler with a quiet place when over-stimulated
- Child can get calm and ready to return to learning
- A place to begin learning mindfulness breathing



## Quiet Place Center

- “Womb” Space
- Small for only one toddler
- Lighting- natural light or dim light
- Sound- use soft fabrics/pillows to soak sound
- Touch-soft, comforting

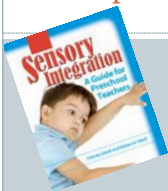


## Quiet Place Center Teach Children How to Use

- One Child
- When to use?
  - Label Child’s Emotion
  - Can use pictures, mirror
- Never used as punishment
- Return child to previous activity when calm



## Information for this presentation taken from:



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HOUSE.

AVAILABLE AT  
[WWW.GHBOOKS.COM](http://WWW.GHBOOKS.COM) OR  
[WWW.AMAZON.COM](http://WWW.AMAZON.COM)

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- Williams, M.S. & Shellenberger, S. (1996). *Introduction to "How does your engine run?" The alert program for self-regulation*. Albuquerque: Therapy Works.

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