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## Could your child benefit from Occupational Therapy?

What is an Occupational Therapist: Occupational Therapy (OT) is a health profession that helps people improve the functioning of their nervous systems in order to develop skills, leading to success in everyday life including: social, personal, academic, and vocational pursuits. An OT is an allied health professional trained in the biological, physical, medical, and behavioral sciences, including: neurology, anatomy, physiology, human development, kinesiology, orthopedics, and psychology. OT's must be licensed to practice in the state of Texas. Pediatrics is a specialty field of occupational therapy. Pediatric occupational therapists can specialize in sensory processing and praxis.

Occupational therapy helps children develop the basic sensory and motor components which influence learning and behavior, such as body awareness, coordinating two sides of the body, fine motor control and organization, motor planning, motor movements and coordination, gross motor coordination, ocular motor skills, and visual perceptual skills.

Therapy helps to develop the underlying skills necessary for learning and performing specific tasks, as well as social and behavioral skills, self-concept, and confidence. Occupational therapists not only work directly with the child, but also with the family- parents and caregivers, and teachers in order to educate and reinforce specific skills and behaviors which will be used to improve and facilitate the child's performance and functioning.

The most important way a parent or teacher can facilitate sensory processing/ sensory integration is by recognizing that it exists and that it plays an important role in the development of a child. An important guideline in facilitating normal sensory processing is to provide an enriched environment that will foster healthy growth and maturation, taking into consideration the specific needs of each individual child.

Sensory processing develops in the course of ordinary childhood activities. For most of us, sensory processing occurs automatically, unconsciously, and without effort. But for some children sensory processing does not develop efficiently. When the process of sensory processing does not occur a number of problems in development, learning, language, social skills, and behavior may become evident.

Research clearly identifies sensory integrative problems in children with learning difficulties and developmental delays. Research also identifies a majority of children with learning difficulties, although normal in intelligence, are likely to have sensory processing problems.



**Tactile Development:** Does your child...

1. Over react or under react to pain compared to same aged children?  Y  N  S
2. Seem sensitive to certain textures or fabrics?  Y  N  S
3. Avoid or crave messy activities more than other children?  Y  N  S
4. Seem unaware of cuts and bruises?  Y  N  S
5. Dislike being touched, especially unexpectedly or become irritated when crowded?  Y  N  S
6. Crave being touched or having deep pressure hugs more than other children?  Y  N  S
7. Seek out rough play with peers, crash frequently into walls, or roll/crash self to floor?  Y  N  S
8. Appear not to be aware of others personal body space- have trouble keeping hands to self or bump into people seemingly unaware of the amount of force?  Y  N  S
9. Tend to wear a coat when it is not needed or will not allow shirt sleeves to be pulled up?  Y  N  S
10. Leave clothes twisted on body?  Y  N  S
11. Avoid or crave going barefoot?  Y  N  S
12. Seem to enjoy sensations that should be painful such as crashing onto the floor or hitting his/her body?  Y  N  S

Comments:

**Visual Development:** Does your child...

1. Appear sensitive to light, preferring dark or dim lighting?  Y  N  S
2. Have difficulty discriminating or naming objects or have difficulty recognizing same and different?  Y  N  S
3. Have difficulty keeping eyes on still objects?  Y  N  S
4. Have difficulty following a moving object smoothly with eyes?  Y  N  S
5. Often squint, rub eyes, or have headaches or watery eyes after sustained eye focus?  Y  N  S
6. Become excited with a lot of visual stimuli?  Y  N  S
7. Resist having vision blocked?  Y  N  S
8. Try to hold objects or books closer than appropriate?  Y  N  S
9. Make poor eye contact?  Y  N  S
10. Orient drawings poorly on page?  Y  N  S
11. Add less detail to drawing or coloring than other same aged children?  Y  N  S

12. Have difficulty with puzzles, using trial and error placement of pieces?  Y  N  S
13. Have a diagnosed visual problem?  Y  N  S
14. Have difficulty locating objects around the room?  Y  N  S
15. Tend to look at objects out of the corner of eye or tilt head when looking at something?  Y  N  S

Comments:

**Vestibular Development:** Does your child...

1. Get motion sickness easily, seem sensitive to movement, get dizzy, or nauseous easily?  Y  N  S
2. Indicate fear of stairs, hills, heights, swinging, or activities requiring balance?  Y  N  S
3. Have poor balance in everyday tasks- falls more frequently than other children?  Y  N  S
4. Seek lots of movement including: swinging, twirling, bouncing, rocking, and spinning when compared to same aged peers?  Y  N  S
5. Have poor endurance for standing and/or sitting posture- seem to require movement to maintain attention?  Y  N  S
6. Tend to not get dizzy or seem less sensitive than most children?  Y  N  S
7. Seem to dislike being picked up or moved more than other children?  Y  N  S
8. Show more distress than typical when riding elevators, escalators, or moving through revolving doors?  Y  N  S

Comments:

**Auditory Development:** Does your child...

1. Appear overly sensitive to loud noises compared to peers- may be frightened or angry?  Y  N  S
2. Hum, sing, chatter, or talk to self during independent play or quiet time more than same aged children?  Y  N  S
3. Have a history of repeated ear infections?  Y  N  S
4. Have a delay in speech development?  Y  N  S
5. Have a difficult time discriminating sounds of letters- isolated or in speech?  Y  N  S
6. Appear to have difficulty understanding or paying attention to what is said to him/her?  Y  N  S
7. Appear easily distracted by sounds; seem to hear sounds that go unnoticed by others?  Y  N  S
8. Have difficulty following simple directions in comparison to peers?  Y  N  S
9. Appear to have difficulty determining the location of sounds?  Y  N  S

Comments:

**Oral Motor and Sensory Development:** Does your child...

1. Gag or become distressed at the thought of certain foods?  Y  N  S
2. Tend to be a picky eater or react adversely to foods that are typically part of a child's diet?  Y  N  S
3. Become distressed over certain food smells more than other children?  Y  N  S
4. Tend to crave certain foods?  Y  N  S
5. Have difficulty coordinating suck/swallow/breath pattern or with chewing/swallowing?  Y  N  S
6. Chew or lick nonfood objects excessively for age (ex: clothing, objects, cheeks or lips)?  Y  N  S
7. Drool past the age of 2 years?  Y  N  S
8. Overstuff food into mouth compared to same aged children?  Y  N  S
9. Inappropriately put non-food objects in mouth?  Y  N  S

Comments:

**Attention and Behavior:** Does your child...

1. Have difficulty organizing or structuring activities?  Y  N  S
2. Display poor work behaviors-require more verbal cueing to complete age appropriate tasks than other children?  Y  N  S
3. Demonstrate aggressiveness or impulsivity when overwhelmed by sensory stimulation?  Y  N  S
4. Seem over-reactive or dramatic when compared to same aged peers?  Y  N  S
5. Become upset by transitions or unexpected changes?  Y  N  S
6. Appear uninterested with group/social activities or tend to withdraw from others?  Y  N  S
7. Have difficulty being disciplined?  Y  N  S
8. Appear overly affectionate or unaware of personal space?  Y  N  S
9. Exhibit marked mood variations, tendency to outburst, or high frustration- seem stubborn or uncooperative?  Y  N  S
10. Seem to have a short attention span compared to same aged children?  Y  N  S
11. Have difficulty entering into play with peers without the disrupting ongoing activities?  Y  N  S
12. Have difficulty resolving peer conflict at an age-appropriate level without intervention?  Y  N  S
13. Have difficulty shifting conversation topics in accordance with peer interests (tends to stay stuck on one topic)?  Y  N  S

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14. Have difficulty participating appropriately during family outings or fieldtrips?

Y  N  S

Comments: