



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.

**Developmental Screening
Checklist for Teachers/ Parents
School-aged Children**

Child's Name: _____ Age (yrs. & mo.): _____

The following checklist may help you decide if your child is having difficulty in his/her development of sensory processing. This screening can be utilized to determine if your child needs further developmental testing and possibly need additional support with occupational therapy.

Y= yes N= no S= sometimes

Gross Motor Development: Does your child...

1. Seem clumsy and accident prone, frequently fall/trip, or seem to have poor balance? Y N S
2. Have difficulty learning new motor movement patterns or motor tasks? Y N S
3. Use extraneous movements during physical activity (sticks out tongue, moves jaw, clenches fists, etc.)? Y N S
4. Appear stiff and rigid, or high toned? Y N S
5. Appear loose, floppy, low tone, or sit in wide base patterns- "W" sitting? Y N S
6. Tire easily, have a slumped sitting posture, or prop head in hands while reading/writing? Y N S
7. Seem fidgety, always on the go, or have difficulty sitting still? Y N S
8. Appear reluctant to participate in sports or physical activity, preferring table activities? Y N S
9. Look awkward or clumsy while moving- difficulty with eating, dressing, jumping, skipping, or running compared to others his/her age? Y N S
10. Have trouble catching and throwing balls of different sizes? Y N S
11. Tend to confuse right and left body sides? Y N S

Comments:

Fine Motor Coordination: Does your child...

1. Hold utensils awkwardly or with difficulty (pencil, spoon, scissors) or drop frequently? Y N S
2. Move tongue or mouth when working with hands? Y N S
3. Have difficulty with or avoid handwriting, drawing, or copying from board or paper? Y N S
4. Switch hands frequently for fine motor tasks- (lack of hand dominance after age 4)? Y N S
5. Avoid crossing midline? Y N S
6. Have trouble using both hands together for fine motor manipulation compared to peers? Y N S
7. Have difficulty grading movement-grasps objects too tightly or too loosely? Y N S

Comments:

Tactile Development: Does your child...

1. Over react or under react to pain? 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 shapes or colors or have difficulty recognizing same and different? Y N S
3. Have difficulty keeping eyes on objects? Y N S
4. Have difficulty following a moving object or line of print smoothly with eyes; tend to lose their place on the page? Y N S
5. Often squint, rub eyes, or have headaches or watery eyes after reading? Y N S
6. Become excited with a lot of visual stimuli? Y N S
7. Resist having vision blocked? Y N S
8. Reverse or confuse numbers, letters, or whole words after 1st grade? Y N S
9. Have poor spacing between letters or words when writing? Y N S
10. Have difficulty with written instructions? Y N S
11. Have difficulty with copying from the blackboard or books? Y N S

12. Make poor eye contact? Y N S
13. Orient drawings poorly on page? Y N S
14. Add less detail to drawing or coloring than other same aged children? Y N S
15. Have difficulty with puzzles, using trial and error placement of pieces? Y N S
16. Have a diagnosed visual problem? Y N S
17. Have difficulty locating objects around the room? Y N S
18. 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. 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 work or quiet time? Y N S
3. Have a history of repeated ear infections? Y N S
4. Have a history of delayed 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 multi-step 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. Chew or lick nonfood objects excessively (ex: clothing, objects, fingers, cheeks or lips)? Y N S
6. Drool past the age of 2 years? Y N S
7. Overstuff food into mouth? Y N S
8. Inappropriately put non-food objects in mouth, i.e. thumb sucking? 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 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 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
14. Have difficulty participating appropriately during family outings or fieldtrips? Y N S

Comments: