

child remain focused and calm.

Introduction

Many children present with sensory processing difficulties. These children can present as being either under or over responsive to touch, noise, taste, smell and/or movement.

This leaflet relates to children who are over responsive or have negative responses to noise or sounds that most children do not notice or cope with easily.

The child who is sensitive to noise may:

- Hold their hands over their ears to protect from sounds i.e. bell, telephone
- Complain about the noise level in the room
- Be easily distracted by irrelevant noises in the environment i.e. water in the pipes, fan etc
- Easily frustrated during listening activities
- Need instructions/directions to be repeated. The child may not be able to block out background noise, giving the impression that they are not paying attention
- Appear irritable, moody, overactive, lash out or they may withdraw from the noise and become tearful and will want to avoid areas where noise occurs.

Children who are sensitive to noise will find

Activities to Improve Auditory Discrimination

Activities designed to improve auditory discrimination (sound recognition) can help in reducing auditory defensiveness as they can help a child recognise what a sound is, what it means and where it is coming from therefore, reducing the child's anxiety and stress.

- Get the child to close their eyes. Play a musical instrument and have the child identify what it is and where it is coming from (remember to prepare the child for when the noise is going to start)
- Teach the child that there are differences between sounds in the environment and the sounds people make. Have the child listen to sounds and identify which group they come from e.g. environment (car, lawn mower) or people (clapping, laughing)
- Use rhythm through nursery rhymes or singing. Clap out the beats in the child's name or the names of objects in the room
- Have the child clap or say when they hear a target sound during a series of isolated sounds e.g. "Listen for the zzz sound". Say the sounds "rrr, p, sss, k, zzz, fff"

Activities to encourage tolerance to noise:

- Deep pressure activities e.g. play with clay, climbing and push pull activities can be helpful to calm a child who is stressed by noise. Try doing these activities prior to or following activities that you know will stress the child.
- When nursery is noisy, encourage outdoor play and movement opportunities as this may help the child calm and organise.
- Test out different ways of calming the child e.g. play soft music that is soothing and rhythmical; reduce the amount of visual stimuli, slow rocking movements.
- Allow child to explore noise, music and sounds in controlled environments.
- Take a 5 minute whisper break. Instruct everybody in the class to talk in a whisper for 5 minutes.

the noise unpleasant, may complain of painful ears and may use avoidance behaviours.

Frequency of activities

Incorporation of activities in the daily setting routine is recommended.

Complete activities from this sheet regularly for at least 3 months

Improving our service

We continue to review our service to make sure that it meets the needs of those who are using it. We would appreciate any suggestions on how we may improve and also comments on what was good about the service.

If you have any compliments, suggestions or complaints, please write to or contact any member of staff in the first instance, or to the Occupational Therapy Service Lead if necessary.

Contact details: see part 1 of pack



USING MY SENSES: USING TOUCH

Early Years Activity Sheet

**PAEDIATRIC OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY SERVICES**