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Fine Motor Skill Development

Fine motor skills refer to controlled movements of the small muscles of the fingers and hands. Children develop these skills in a step-by-step progression:

4-4 1/2 YEARS

- can draw and copy a square and cross (one vertical and one horizontal intersecting lines)
- can use scissors to follow and cut straight and curved lines
- can manage buttons, zippers, and snaps completely

4 1/2- 5 YEARS

- folds paper in half, making sure the edges meet
- can feed himself soup with little or no spilling
- puts a key in a lock and opens it

5 YEARS

- Can dress completely by self, and usually ties shoelaces
- uses a knife to spread food items (jelly, peanut butter, etc.)
- cuts squares, triangles, circles, and simple pictures with scissors
- uses a mature “tripod grasp" on writing utensils (thumb & tips of 1st two fingers) and uses the fingers to generate movement (because small muscles of hand have developed) to write/draw/color
- able to draw and copy a diagonal line; copies a triangle
- writes first name

5 1/2- 6 YEARS

- able to copy a sequence of letters or numbers correctly
- colors inside the lines
- sufficient bilateral hand coordination to cut out complex pictures, accurately following the outline
- can build a five block "bridge” or a six block pyramid
- able to complete complex puzzles
- handedness well established

For more information, click on icon:

Finger Dexterity

Developing Coordination for Scissor Skills

Fine Motor Milestones

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Classroom Furniture – size matters:

- Properly fitted furniture is essential for classroom success and impacts students body positioning
- Ergonomically INCORRECT positioning impacts students attention, postural control and stability. It impacts success with fine-motor skills such as printing/coloring and can stress the muscles of the back

Ideal furniture size will vary between students within the same grade. Some questions to ask include:

- Can students' feet rest flat on the ground while their back is resting against the back of the chair?
- Can students comfortably rest their arms on desk top?
- Are students frequently slumped on their desk top?
- Are the desks/chairs wobbly? i.e. are all legs the same height?
- When looking at new furniture – is the furniture size adjustable?

Golden rule of seating. If possible, modify seating to follow the below guidelines:

✓ 90-90-90 rule: knees, hips, and feet should all be bent at 90 degree angles
✓ Feet should be flat on the floor when student is sitting with their bottom at the back of chair
✓ Desk/table height should come 1-2 inches above students bent elbow

If current seating is un-modifiable and no alternative size is available:

✓ Consider using a block of books, stool, foot rest (Jett Step) or bouncy band to support feet resting flat
✓ Consider using a chair cushion, such as the move n' sit cushion when desk height cannot be adjusted
✓ Consider alternative seating options such as standing desks, kneeling work stations, lying on floor to work , etc.

For more information, click on icon:

Classroom Seating

Ball Chairs

Click to go back to index

Using Backpacks Wisely

Lighten the load. No matter how well-designed the backpack is, less weight is always better. Use the bathroom scale to check that a pack isn't over 10% of your child's body weight (for example, the backpack of a child who weighs 80 pounds shouldn't weigh more than 8 pounds).

Use and pick up the backpack properly. Make sure kids use both shoulder straps. Bags that are slung over one shoulder or across the chest — or that only have one strap — aren't as effective at distributing the weight as bags with two wide shoulder straps, and therefore may strain muscles. Also tighten the straps enough for the backpack to fit closely to the body. The pack should rest evenly in the middle of the back and not sag down to the buttocks.

Look for the following when choosing a backpack:

- ✓ **A lightweight pack:** get one that doesn't add a lot of extra weight to your child's load.
- ✓ **Size** The shoulder straps should fit comfortably and not dig in to the shoulders, allowing the arms to move freely; the bottom of the pack should rest in the contour of the lower back; and the pack should "sit" evenly in the middle of the back, not "sag down" toward the buttocks.
- ✓ **Has two wide, padded shoulder straps:** straps that are too narrow can dig into shoulders
- ✓ **Padded back:** it not only provides increased comfort, but also protects kids from being poked by sharp objects or edges (pencils, rulers, notebooks, etc.) inside the pack
- ✓ **A waist belt:** this helps to distribute the weight more evenly across the body
- ✓ **Multiple compartments:** to help distribute the weight throughout the pack
- ➢ Although packs on wheels (which look like small, overhead luggage bags) may be good options for students who have to lug around really heavy loads, they're very hard to pull up stairs and to roll through snow. Check with the school before buying a rolling pack; many don't allow them because they can be a tripping hazard in the hallways.

Click on the link below for more information:

Guidelines to choosing a backpack

Click to go back to index

Classroom Strengthening

Core and Shoulder Strengthening

- Encourage students to use proper posture, “sit tall”.
- Have them work in alternate positions, such as full or half kneeling (cue them to keep their bum up off their heels), lying on their stomach, etc.
- Use active seating devices, such as air filled cushions or exercise balls. The less stable surface causes their core muscles to engage more.
- Complete animal walks from one area to another, as a class, or as individuals

Animal Walks

Core Stability

Arm and Wrist Strength

- Do Chair Push-Ups and Chair Pull-Downs
- Complete Animal Walks
- Complete work on a slanted surface, such as a white board, smart board, or slant board on desk. To create your own slant board you can place a firm 3-4 inch wide binder on the students desk top, slanted down towards them.

Chair Push-Ups: Sit on a chair and hold onto each side of the seat of the chair. Lean forward and push down with the arms lifting buttocks off the chair and legs off the floor and balance for a few seconds. See how many you can do in a row or do fewer but try to hold each one as long as you can.

Chair Pull-Downs: While seated at their desks, students grab on to both sides of their chair and pull up with both arms, trying to push their buttocks down into their seat. Hold each pull-down for a count of “5-one-thousand”. Repeat.

Hand and finger Strengthening

- Punch holes with a hole punch using a variety of papers and thickness. Punch holes for lacing cards, to make confetti or collage material, or to make a dot-to-dot path to follow with a crayon or scissors. Try decorative paper punches (stamp) for a craft project as well.
- Cutting through heavier paper such as index cards, bristol board and cardboard.
- Tearing paper or cardboard.
- Play wastepaper basketball – tear up pieces of scrap paper, crumple up into balls, using only one hand, and then shoot at the wastepaper basket.

For more information click on icon:

Developing Grip and Pinch Strength

Click to go back to index

Pencil Grasp

- An efficient pencil grasp should be taught and reinforced from an early age (age 3 and up). An efficient grasp allows the student to:
  - Move thumb and fingers in a coordinated way
  - Complete writing/drawing tasks without fatigue or reporting pain
  - Complete writing/drawing tasks neatly enough that work can be read without significant effort
- Bad habits can form quickly and may be difficult to correct later on
- A tripod or quadrupod grasp should be encouraged whenever possible
- Even if alternate grasps appear to be working for a student in K or Gr. 1, they may lead to issues with pain, fatigue, legibility, writing speed or overly large printing later on, as writing demands increase.

The "Gold Standard" of Grasps

Dynamic Tripod

Dynamic Quadrupod

Ideas and Strategies:

- ✓ Work on activities that promote (see linked handout):
  - Use of "alligator pinch" (tip of thumb and index finger)
  - Separation of the working side of the hand (thumb, index, middle) and stabilizing side of the hand (ring and pinky)
  - Strengthening of the hand
- ✓ Model and practice correct pencil grip multiple times a day, especially at the start of the school year. The following simple techniques can be done **every** time students pick up a writing tool:
  - Pinch-Flip → https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhtdJ4D0OtQ
  - Pom-Pom method → https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kIFXZdpnLi8
- ✓ Encourage students to hold a small item like a pom-pom, eraser or button under their ring and pinky fingers while writing
- ✓ To discourage thumb-wrapping, put a sticker or drop of liquid paper on the pencil for student to place their thumb on
- ✓ Experiment with different sizes and shapes of tools:
  - Short pencils. Triangular pencils, "Primary" pencils
- ✓ For children Grade 2 and over, a pencil gripper may be beneficial to break poor habits

Checklist for Dynamic Tripod Grasp:

- ❑ Writing tool held between pad of thumb and index finger, near the tip of the tool.
- ❑ Pencil resting back in the thumb web space
- ❑ An open 'C' shape to the thumb web space
- ❑ Small finger movements to control the pencil. Fingers are not stiff.
- ❑ Pinky side of the hand rests against the writing surface

For more information click on icon:

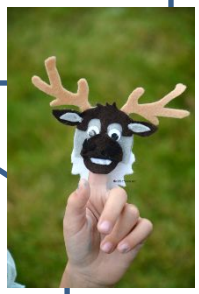
Developing an efficient pencil grasp

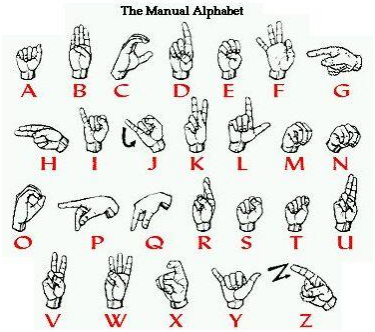
Developing a Palmar Arch

Click to go back to index

Pencil Control

- Look at where the level of pencil control is coming from. Does the student use arm, wrist, whole hand or finger movements to move the pencil when coloring or writing?
- Larger level movements mean less refined markings and less pencil control
- Encourage “wiggle fingers”





Ideas and Strategies:

- For younger grades complete finger action songs that require fingers to move in isolation of each other. Try songs and games that involve hand and finger actions. For example, “The Itsy Bitsy Spider” and “Where is Thumbkin?”
- Practice in-hand manipulation. For an example refer to the Feeding Fishy handout below.
- Promote the use of a Dynamic Tripod pencil grasp. Pencil Grasp
- Sign Language: Have a sign language word/letter of the day to practice with the class.
- Inchy the Inchworm: Start by holding the pencil as you would for printing (tripod grasp). Slowly “inch” (bend and straighten the fingers) the fingers up the shaft of the pencil until you reach the eraser. Flip the pencil using one hand only and slowly inch back towards the tip of the pencil. A great pre-writing warm up.
- Pencil Push Ups: Start by holding the pencil as you would for printing (tripod grasp). Slowly bend and straighten the fingers, keeping them in place on the pencil, 5- 10 times. A great pre-writing/coloring warm up.

For more information click on icon:

Feeding Fishy

Pencil Control

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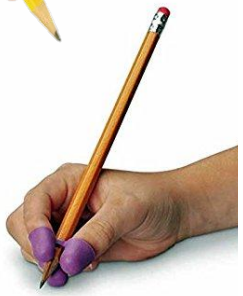
Choosing a Pencil Grip: Considerations



- ➢ Is there a functional impact?
  - ✓ Complaints of joint or muscle pain?
  - ✓ Fatigues quickly? Has trouble keeping up? Complains hand is tired?
  - ✓ Difficulty controlling the pencil to print legibly?
- ➢ Try to match the grip to the area(s) of need: 1. Increase comfort 2. Reduce pain or fatigue 3. Improve finger positioning and/or pencil control
- ➢ A pencil grip that looks incorrect may not require correcting if there is no functional impact.
- ➢ Not all grips work for all students. You may need to try more than one and compare results.
- ➢ Ask yourself: Will the student be able to keep track of the grip? Use it independently? Is the student motivated to change? Will they be distressed/resistant to using the grip?

You've Chosen a Grip – Now What?

- ❖ An initial decline in writing speed, legibility or even muscle soreness is normal.
- ❖ Allow the student time to get used to the grip before evaluating if it's helping.
- ❖ Monitor frequently to ensure student is using the grip correctly.
- ❖ Try to use the grip across environments and writing tools when possible
- ❖ Discontinue use of the grip if you are not seeing the desired outcome. It's time to consider consulting an OT!

Why Don't Grips Always Work?

- They go missing
- Children use them incorrectly
- Not used consistently enough or across settings
- They don't always improve legibility
- Often used as a "quick fix" without addressing the underlying reason why a student has an inefficient grasp
  - Students revert to old habits when not using the grip
- Pencil grasp becomes ingrained early on and is often very difficult to correct beyond grade one

For more information, click on icon:

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Left Handed Students:

Ways to Support our Lefty's in a Right-Handed World

Left-Handed Students can do all the same activities as right-handed students, but sometimes with a different approach. They may benefit from a number of task adaptations.

Positioning:

- Tilt the paper so that the left side of the paper is lined up with the angle of their left arm
- Position the paper/workbook slightly to the left of the student when printing
- Sit the student at the end of a row on the left side so they don't bump elbows with right-handed students
- Place material to be copied on the right side or above the students work so that it is clearly visible

Hand Positioning

- Encourage a Tripod grasp and cue them to hold their pencil about 1 inch up the shaft. This will allow them to see what they are printing without hooking their wrist
- Ensure their hand is placed below and not above the writing line
- Consider using a slant board or slanted surface(3-ring binder) to write on, as this allows the wrist to extend and prevents hooking of the wrist
- Continue to teach letter formation, but monitor left-handed students for confusion with directionality. Left-handed students may find it easier to pull their pencil from right to left, than push it from left to right when making horizontal lines in letters. Continue to encourage continuous stroke printing, to support legible printing and decreased letter reversals .

- Left-Handed scissors have the blades reversed. This allows the left-handed student to see where they are cutting. (Fiskars™ make true left-handed scissors)
- Consider using scribblers with the coil on the top or the right side to allow the student to position their arm without the coil interfering.
- Spacing can be difficult for lefties. Consider using a small post-it note (this won't physically interfere with the writing hand) to space out words, rather than finger spacing or using objects.

For more information, click on icon:

Left Handed Students

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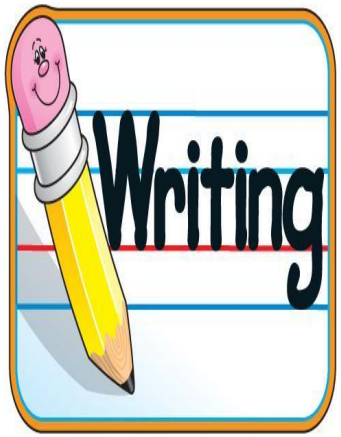
Letter formations difficulties may show up in the classroom as:

- Taking much longer than peers to complete printed work – even when they are not distracted.
- Frequently losing marks on tests or worksheets because you can't read the answers or the answers are too short.
- Difficulty printing on a line
- Illegible work



Continuous stroke printing helps:

- Improve legibility.
- Reduce letter reversals.
- Develop "motor memories" for letter formations.
- Reduce directionality confusion.
- Increase speed and flow of printing.

Factors to look at that impact printing:

- Posture and core strength
- Furniture (desk/chair size)
- Paper position
- Writing tool used
- Development of clear hand dominance
- Development of efficient pencil grasp
- Understanding of basic directions, left /right, up/down, top/bottom
- Vision
- Fundamental language skills to understand the 26 distinct letters,
- Ability to incorporate letter sounds and formations
- Attention and focus

Ideas - strategies:

- Focus on quality over quantity of written work
- Write the letter with the students watching and then you watch them write it. Repeat as needed.
- Say, and encourage the student to learn, the verbal scripts for letter formations they struggle with. Refer to attached handout.
- Rainbow writing – have the child trace over a letter or number (using correct start/stop points) with 3 to 5 colors. Then have them write the letter or number.
- Teach continuous stroke printing. Fewer pencil lifts mean fewer opportunities for errors. See attached handout.

For more information click on icon:

Verbal Scripts for Letters

Continuous Stroke Printing

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Letter Size

- There are 62 different letter forms. There are only 3 letter sizes.
- When practicing letter size, form seems to self-correct somewhat, as children focus on making their letters the correct size.
- Letters are more easily identifiable when they sit accurately between the writing lines.
- Keeping the letter size cues fun and simple, helps kids recall the information and have fun.

Lets Get Moving!

Call out letters and have them show which category they would fit into

- ✓giraffes = kids stand tall
- ✓turtle = go on hands and knees
- ✓worm = lying on floor

Introduce letter categories (turtle, giraffe, and worm)

- ✓ Giraffe (touch the top and bottom line)
- ✓ Turtle (sit on the bottom line and go to the middle)
- ✓ Worm (touch the middle and go under the bottom)

✓ Have students complete letter size corrections on a pre-made worksheet, so they are able to feel the success of finding and correcting the errors, rather then correcting their own work .

For more information click on the icon:

Letter Size Worksheet

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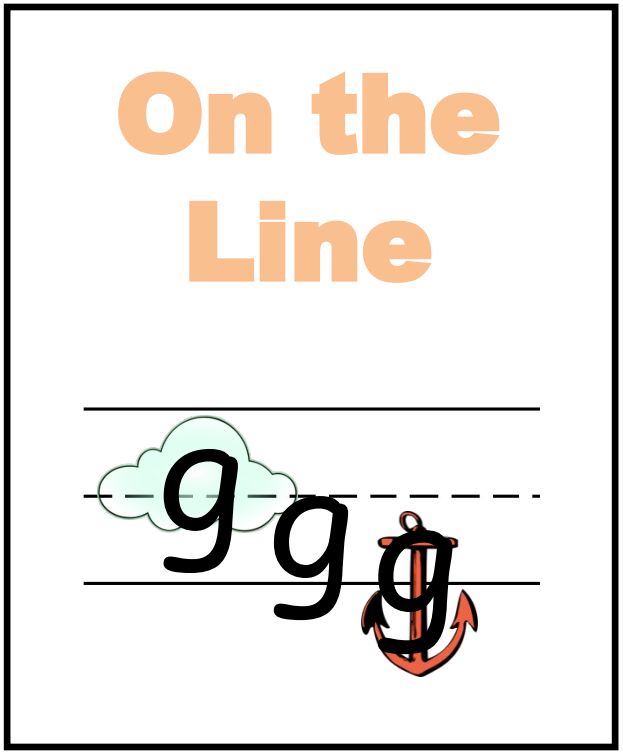
Line Usage

When starting to teach line usage ensure:

- The child understands spatial concepts involved with a line (i.e. top, bottom and middle).
- The lines being used are an appropriate size for the student's level of pencil control.

Other considerations:

- The types of lines being used to teach students, for example:
  - Two lined paper (From the Handwriting Without Tears program)
  - Interlined paper (most commonly seen in school)
  - Regular ruled paper
- Are the parents using the same approach to teaching this concept at home?



Ideas - strategies:

Introduce Floaters and Sinkers

- ✓ Letters that float above the line instead of resting on the line are called floaters. See cloud picture above
- ✓ Letters that sink below are sinkers. See anchor picture above
- ✓ Explain how turtles don't walk with their legs partially in the ground! Also, worms aren't sinkers…..they belong underground

For more information click on icon:

On the Line Worksheet

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Spacing

- Whenever possible, modify worksheets to provide extra space (extending lines, etc.).
- Have student try to touch tips of both index fingers very close together, without touching. Challenge the student by saying, "How close can you get your fingertips without touching?" Ask the student to try to describe how small this space is. Then have them look at printed text (workbook, library book) and "check" if the letters in a word are really that close. Ask student to write a word with the letters in the word being as close as two fingertips without touching.

For more information click on:

Spacing Worksheet

Introduce spaghetti and meatball spacing

- ✓ Spaghetti Spacing – A small space between each letter in a word. If there isn't then the letters can run overtop of each other and one can't read them
- ✓ Meatball spacing - A bigger space needs to be used to separate the words so it is easy to see that they are two different words

Sentence Doctor

- ✓ The teacher writes a sentence either with no spaces, with spaces that are TOO LARGE, or with inconsistent spaces… the kids take turns playing the doctor and going up to perform surgery to fix the sick sentence and make it better.

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Visual Motor Integration (VMI) entails effective, efficient communication between the eyes and the hands, to enable you to write, draw, or copy what you see. Visual motor skills are also important in eye hand coordination. For example, watching the ball as it is thrown to you, visually tracking it and then moving your body and hands appropriately to catch it.

Some strategies that may help to strengthen Visual Motor Integration

- **For younger students**: integrate non-writing ways to enhance visual-motor skills, such as cutting with scissors, making shapes or objects with play-do, practicing buttoning/zipping/tying, playing catch, pouring, etc. Tracing, doing mazes, or doing puzzles, can all help build eye-hand coordination.
- Students may not catch errors on visual scanning tests, and may benefit from interventions around study skills, such as strategies for checking work. For example, if a student frequently does not notice that the sign has changed on math sheets, have them highlight the math signs in a different color before starting (pink for addition, yellow for subtraction, etc.)
- Monitor the amount of visual information presented to the student, on worksheets, etc. Try to keep the worksheets clear and simple. Encourage students to use a blank sheet of paper to cover up part of the worksheet, or to fold their worksheet in half. Strive for quality, not quantity in written work.
- Teach keyboarding skills so the student can learn compensatory strategies for handwriting assignments. Also try modifications such as having a peer note taker, providing copies of the notes, giving extra time to complete longer writing assignments, and letting the student type, record, or give answers orally instead of in writing.
- Acknowledge the students difficulties and support them in their success in this area. They often have so many great ideas for written stories, or have all the answers in their memory, they just cannot get their visual and motor components to efficiently work together to write it out.

For more information click on:

Visual Motor Integration Skills

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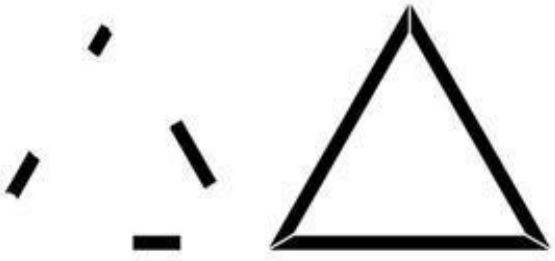
Visual Perceptual Skills

Visual perception refers to the brain's ability to make sense of what the eyes see. It is not the same as visual acuity, which refers to how clearly a person sees (i.e. 20/20 vision). The Visual Perceptual Skills most commonly referred to within the school environment are form constancy, visual discrimination, figure-ground perception, visual closure, visual memory and visual sequential memory.

- **Strategies**
- Get the students feedback regarding things such as which size of print or color of paper they like to work on.
- Give them a lot of breaks. Don't allow them to become overly fatigued from visual tasks.
- Carefully observe the time the child is able to stay focused and break things down into little "chunks" that they can complete in that amount of time (do two math problems instead of five). This is also a good idea when assigning homework.
- An excellent visual processing strategy is to incorporate regular movement breaks, like walking around the room, chair push ups or going to the pencil sharpener. The physical activity will jump start their nervous system, and they will be able to concentrate for another short period of time.



For more information, click on

Guidelines for Identifying Visual Perceptual Problems in School –Age Children

Visual Perceptual Development

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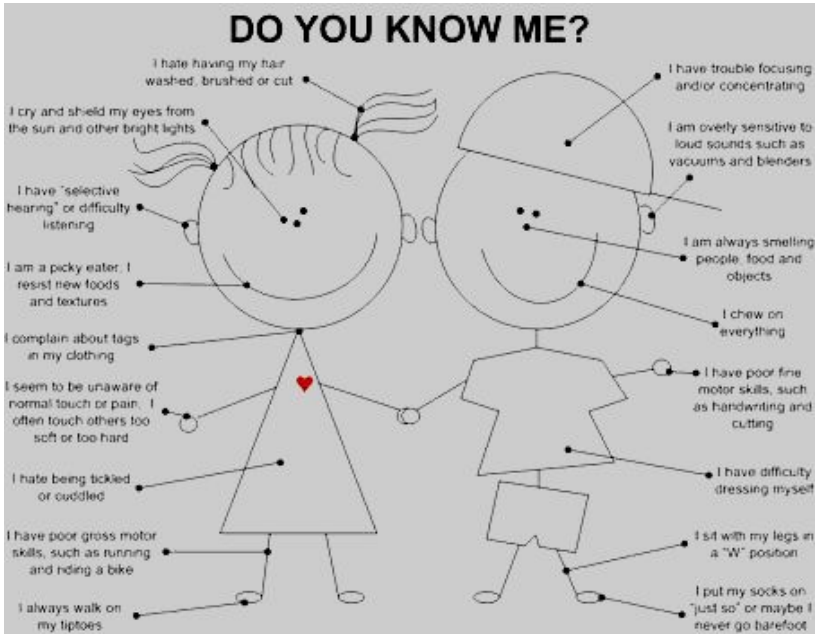
Sensory Regulation:

- The ability to effectively register, process, organize and respond to sensory information so that the body can be used effectively in the environment
- Finding a balanced state of alertness depends on the registration of sensory input received throughout the day
- 7 Senses:
  1. Tactile (touch)
  2. Visual
  3. Auditory (hearing)
  4. Gustatory (taste)
  5. Olfactory (smell)
  6. Proprioception
  7. Vestibular



www.sensorystreet.com

Kids have little to no control over their environments or the expectations placed on them

It's important to consider whether the goal of an activity is for the student complete the task the same way as the rest of the students, or to participate in a way that is comfortable and meaningful for them.

A few examples of sensory-related behaviours…

- Inattentive, distractible
- Hyperactive, constantly moving
- Low arousal, appears tired, disengaged
- Squirmy, fidgety
- Bumping into others, clumsy
- Irritable
- Loud voice
- Wandering
- Sensitive to noise
- Difficulty with transitions
- Difficulty standing in line

For more information click on:

I'm a Sensational Kid

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BEHAVIOUR

All problem behaviours serve one of two functions:

1. To obtain a desired event/outcome
2. To escape or avoid an undesired event/outcome
   *This *event* may be sensory related, or not (activities/objects, attention, social events).

Children display challenging behaviour(s) when:

- They lack more appropriate skills
- They are being positively reinforced (not necessarily intentionally) for using the inappropriate behaviour

The **A-B-C Intervention Approach** can assist caregivers to identify the function of behaviour (and if it is sensory linked), and provide students with appropriate behavioural alternatives. Monitor behaviors over the course of several days and take note of the following:

1. **A**ntecedent: identifying what triggered the behavioural event. The antecedent happens before the behaviour and can predict the behavioural occurrence.
2. **B**ehaviour: describing what the challenging behaviour was.
3. **C**onsequence: Identifying what happened after, what the child achieved from their behaviour, and whether the inappropriate behaviour is being positively reinforced.
   (Lynch, 2016)

WHEN BEHAVIOUR IS SENSORY-RELATED…

Difficulty regulating sensation may lead to children exhibiting sensory-related behaviours, otherwise known as a "stress response". **The question we should instead ask is: is the child's behaviour related, or not related to sensory processing difficulties?**

- **Antecedent:** Look for environmental triggers (light, sound, need to touch, move etc). The child is being triggered by a difficulty processing one or more of their senses.
- **Behaviour:** These behaviours are the child's attempt to regulate despite difficulties with sensory processing. These children often require adult help to find a more socially appropriate way of regulating. Children who exhibit challenging sensory-relatd behaviours do not mean to be "frusterating", "difficult", or "problem children". Sensory related behaviours are often "unconscious" in nature as the child may be unaware of how their body is reacting.
- **Consequence:** The child either obtains or avoids a sensory experience.

Also think about:

- Health
- Fatigue level: may present as hyperactivity with extreme fatigue… the body's way of getting to a just right level. You also may see a student who is "droopy" , daydreams etc.
- Time of day the behaviors occurred

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WHEN BEHAVIOUR IS NOT SENSORY-RELATED…

- **Antecedent:** The antecedent will be an environmental event NOT linked to a sensory experience. For example: a difficult task, a non-preferred activity, structured seat work. The student wants to obtain something or avoid something (i.e. activities/objects, attention, social event).
- **Behaviour:** The problem behaviour may at first be unconscious, however, if it is followed by a positive consequence the child will quickly learn that "if I do this, I get this result". The child may then start to exhibit problem behaviour(s) consciously to achieve the desired result.
- **Consequence:** The child has either obtained or avoided/escaped an activity or object, attention, and/or a social event.

An Example of Non-Sensory Related Behaviour…

		Behaviour	Consequence
Current	A student wants to interact with peers	Student uses offensive language	Student achieve attention and interactions from peers
Alternative		Student uses appropriate language	

- In this example, the role of the caregiver may be to teach the child appropriate conversation skills.

(Lynch, 2016)

WHAT YOU CAN DO!

After Identifying the Antecedent, Behaviour, and Consequence...

If you think the behaviour is sensory-related:

- Become a "sensory detective" to identify environmental triggers (antedecents) such as light, noise, smell, need to move, touch etc.
- Provide appropriate environmental modifications, tools, and/or adaptations that help meet the child's sensory need(s)
- **Please refer to the slides on "Sensory Regulation" for these strategies**
- If the challenging behaviour is not sensory-related, these modifications and tools may not result in behavioural changes.
- Can refer to slides on specific sensory inputs: touch, sound, proprioception, vestibular and visual.

If you do not think the behaviour is sensory-related:

- The goal should not be to eliminate the problem behaviour, but rather **to introduce a socially appropriate alternative that still meets the child's needs and serves the same function**.
- Teach the child the new tool/skill so that they do not have to use the problem behaviour to achieve a desired consequence.
- Praise the positive: encourage the child to use the alternative behaviour in replace of the problem behaviour
- Neutralize the negative: ensure that the child cannot achieve the desired consequence (positive reinforcement) from engaging in the problem behaviour. Do not acknowledge the problem behaviour if it does occur (planned ignoring) (Lynch, 2016)

For more information, please visit:

Positive Behavioural Supports for Children: http://www.pbsc.info/
Positive Behavioural Interventions and Support: http://www.pbis.org/
STAR Institute for Sensory Processing Disorder: https://www.spdstar.org/basic/about-spd

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Tactile Inputs

Hypersensitivity - Strategies (Avoids Touch):

- Avoid light touch and approaching from behind
- Gradually introduce opportunities for tactile play
  - Putting on lotion, drying hands with a towel, touching different materials, sand, bead, water tables
- Make sure the child is, and feels, in control
- Make sure the input is predictable and expected

•Try strategies for at least two weeks. Initially it may be a distraction, but with time the novelty will wear off. Providing the child with the tactile input they are seeking will promote increased attention.

Hyposensitivity-Strategies (Does not seem to notice, or is under sensitive to touch input):

- Provide lots of opportunity for "hands-on"/multi-sensory activities
- Use a weighted pencil or textured pencil grip
- Use writing tools that provide increased resistance/feedback (i.e. crayon, chalk)
- Allow the student to chew gum
- Allow student to keep their hands busy

Children may also have:

- Mixed Sensitivity: a combination of hyper and hyposensitivity, responding differently to different touch inputs
- Fluctuating Tactile Sensitivity: responses that change over time and depending on the situation. Often impacted by the overall level of sensory inputs they are receiving.

For more information click on the icon

Tactile activities Classroom Fidgets

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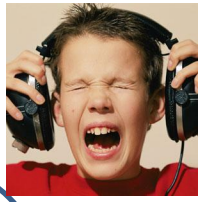

Strategies for Low auditory registration

(An under-responsiveness to auditory input.)

- Sounds that are loud and variable are alerting
- Use an F.M. system
- Use simple, direct commands and break down multi-step tasks
- Use visual schedules or instructions (i.e. written instructions)

Strategies for high auditory registration

(Very aware and sensitive to auditory input.)

- Position child away from high traffic areas
- Place tennis balls on legs of chairs
- Provide noise reducing earplugs or headphones
- Provide pre-warning when possible (i.e. for fire drills, etc.)
- Complete deep pressure activities before and during loud situations
- Provide gradual introduction to auditory experiences to desensitize
- Sounds that are rhythmic, soft and constant are calming

Auditory Strategies:

✓ When introducing headphone/earplugs, have a basket in the classroom with many pairs so other children in the class can try them out too! Those that need them will continue to use them once the novelty wears off.

✓ Try gradual noise introduction to desensitize

Sensitivity to noise and washroom use:

Often children with auditory sensitivity find the school bathroom stressful due to echoing and increased auditory input (i.e. toilet flushing, doors closing, water running and other children making noise). These students may avoid using the washroom or refuse to flush the toilet. To help desensitize this we may:

- Start having the child use a small washroom (staff washroom) and once they are functioning well there integrate them to the large washroom
- Can provide a pair of headphone/earmuffs for the child to wear while in the washroom.
- Teach the child about how the facilities work (i.e. auto flush vs. manual)
- Initially have only the child in the washroom (with adult if needed) and slowly add additional children
- Gradually decrease the distance between the toilet and the child when the toilet is flushed

For more information click on the icon

Reducing Classroom Distractions

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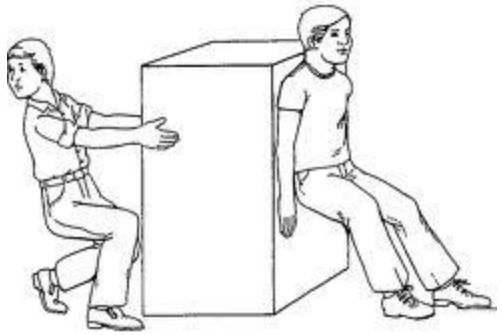
Proprioception

- Proprioception is the knowledge of where our bodies are in space
- There are special "proprioceptive" receptors in our muscles and joints
- Input to these receptors helps the brain organize and plan movement
- Your sense of proprioception is what allows you to perform activities without watching what your body parts are doing.



For more information click on:

Heavy Work

Deep Pressure Activities

Strategies and Ideas:

- Incorporate deep pressure/heavy work activities throughout the day
- Incorporate massage or deep pressure on shoulders
- Wrap therapy band around legs of chair to be kicked against, quietly.
- Provide opportunity for gross motor play –
  obstacle courses, tag, follow-the-leader, animal walks
- Provide an area to complete desk work while standing
- "Heavy work"/proprioceptive activities have a very powerful self-regulatory influence. Think about how relaxed you feel after a massage
- If you are unsure of what strategies to start with, try heavy work!

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Vestibular

- This is our sense of balance and movement
- It tells us…
  - if we are moving
  - in what direction we are moving
  - how fast we are moving
  - whether objects are moving in relation to us

Over responsiveness to vestibular input

- ✓ Provide stable, supportive seating
- ✓ Provide opportunities for deep pressure input throughout the day
- ✓ Provide a slow and gradual introduction to movement in different linear planes:
  - slow, rhythmic forward/backward swinging or rocking
  - swaying side to side
  - slowly rocking side to side while laying on back
- ✓ Let the child initiate and/or guide the movement within their comfort zone.
- ✓ Appropriate classroom seating is important- refer to handout

A tendency to seek out additional vestibular input

- ✓ Deep Pressure/Heavy work help to build body awareness, calm and organize
- ✓ Provide frequent movement breaks especially before/after table work or listening tasks
- ✓ Provide an unstable sitting surface:
  - therapy ball
  - Move n' Sit cushion
  - rocking chair
  - Stool with one leg (T-stool)
- ✓ Generally vertical (i.e. jumping) and rotational (i.e. spinning) movements are alerting
- ✓ May require extra "safety awareness" instruction
- ✓ Consider wrapping "therapy band" around the legs of the student's chair
- ✓ Movement at circle…
  - action songs
  - hands-on activities
  - fidget toys

For more information, click on icon:

Classroom Seating

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Students who are under responsive to visual input may:

- Seek out and create increased opportunities for visual input and/or look carefully or intensely at people/objects
- Enjoy looking at moving or spinning objects
- Have difficulty visually focusing on work
- Constantly look around to see what is going on
- Create art projects with bold colors

Strategies:

✓ Work in well lit rooms (bright lights vs. dim lights)
✓ Create a visually stimulating environment: bright, warm colours, extra/bright graphics on worksheets
✓ Put objects on brightly coloured paper
✓ When possible allow them to use brightly coloured writing tools
✓ May also benefit from visual "anchors" (i.e. starting dots, green line on left side of writing paper, red on right side as cues for where to start and stop on the writing lines)

Students that are over responsive may:

- Look at things through peripheral vision
- Do well in rooms with dim lights vs. bright lights.
- May shade eyes or hide head in bright rooms
- May be bothered by subtle flickering of fluorescent or bright lights

Strategies:

✓ Remove visual distractions such as non-essential posters, and mobiles
✓ Cover shelves with curtains and keep workspaces uncluttered
✓ Use dimmer switches or place tissue paper over fluorescent lights
✓ Reduce expectations for eye contact
✓ Reduce glare on whiteboards. Use darker markers.
✓ Fold worksheets in half, enlarge font, reduce graphics
✓ Seat the student at the front of the classroom
✓ If removing and reducing distractions cannot be achieved try to reduce the visual input they can see while working:
  ✓ Placing two study corrals in the classroom
  ✓ Place an empty up-right binder around work area
  ✓ Place 3-sided (fold) display boards around work area
  ✓ Place large appliance boxes around desks

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Reducing Classroom Distractions

Deep Pressure Activities

Sensory Friendly Classroom

A “sensory smart” classroom incorporates alerting and calming activities throughout the daily routine, to support learning and focus. Heavy work and deep pressure activities are great movement breaks to fit into your classroom. These types of movement breaks work as calming or alerting sensory activities to improve your students’ ability to attend and focus during school-related tasks.

- Heavy work/deep pressure activities - Use these activities to prepare for desk time or at transition times throughout the day.
- Schedule whole classroom movement breaks within your regular routine , such as stretching, deep breathing and deep pressure activities, to re-energize your students throughout the day.
- Students who seek out “heavy work” can have special jobs such as pushing or lifting items within the classroom i.e. chairs) or erasing the chalkboard or dry erase board.
- Hands - Have your students use adaptive grips to provide more feedback and awareness to their hands during writing activities. Can have a fidget basket for students to access.
- Minimize visual distractions by organizing materials in bins or cabinets, limiting items hanging from walls and ceilings, etc.
- Design a quiet area with comfortable cushions and beanbag chairs, headphones with classical music, and a study table for students.
- Alternative seating positions – Can have standing desks, kneeling work stations, therapy ball/ball chairs, air filled cushions on chairs, resistance band for student to kick against, or have students lie on a beanbag chair or on their tummy.
- Can add equipment to your classroom that will provide both calming and alerting sensory inputs, including a rocking chair, net or hammock swing, and small exercise trampoline.

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Calming Activities For High Engine Students:

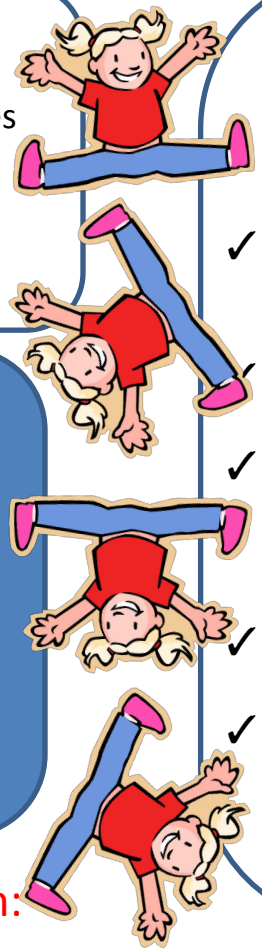
- Your body is like a car engine, sometimes it runs **high**, **low** or **just right**
- Students with high engine levels often have difficulty focusing on their work and/or teacher in the classroom

Encourage:

- Heavy work and deep pressure activities
- Slow, rhythmical movements
- Quiet/soothing environments

Avoid:

- Fast, uncontrolled movement- jumping, spinning
- High stimulation environments- bright, loud, busy



Calming Strategies for the Classroom

Not all sensory strategies influence the body in the same way. It is important to be mindful if the strategy chosen has calming or alerting effects and to monitor the students' response.

✓ Finding a spot on the wall and trying to "push the wall away" using different body parts (i.e. hands, feet, back, hip, shoulders).

Do "seat" push-ups (i.e. place their hands on the seat of the chair and try to lift themselves up and hold).

✓ Allowing the student to be a classroom "helper" by erasing the board, moving chairs and desks around the room, moving gym mats and other equipment, passing out papers, taking messages to the office, etc.

✓ If you have access to a rocking chair, allow the student to rock slowly and rhythmically for a few minutes

✓ Lower lights, play soft/slow music and speak in a calm tone

For more information, click on icon:

- Improving Attention
- Deep Pressure Activities
- Heavy Work

Be mindful of the fact that a strategy that supports one student might impact other students around them. What is calming for one student may be alerting for another student. Finding "just right" strategies for each individual classroom may take time.

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Alerting Strategies for Low Engine Students

- Your body is like a car engine, sometimes it runs **high**, **low** or **just right**
- Some students have naturally high or low engine levels
- Students with low engine levels often need extra stimulation in the classroom to bring their engines to a level where they can attend effectively

Encourage:

- Heavy work which is an overall regulator of the sensory system
- Quick, intense movements
- Stimulating environments- bright, active, engaging

Avoid:

- Low lighting, warm temperature, speaking in a quiet tone

For more information, click on icon:

Improving Attention

Heavy Work

Alerting Strategies for the Classroom

Not all sensory strategies influence the body in the same way. It is important to be mindful if the strategy chosen has calming or alerting effects and to monitor the students' response.

- ✓ Taking the attendance sheet to the office, running errands for the teacher, erasing the board, passing out papers
- ✓ Jumping jacks, scissors jumps or bouncing on a trampoline
- ✓ Heavy work movement breaks
- ✓ Listening to music/sounds with a fast pace
- ✓ Allow the student to have a bottle filled with cold water- cold temperatures are alerting and keeping the body hydrated increases energy levels

Be mindful of the fact that a strategy that supports one student might impact other students around them. What is calming for one student may be alerting for another student. Finding "just right" strategies for each individual classroom may take time.

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Appropriate Use of Classroom Fidgets:

Almost everyone fidgets to some degree at some time. Fidgeting usually increases when we are stressed or have to be still for too long. It provides the brain with movement input , and can increase attention and language processing (if the fidget is not overly distracting).

Students may benefit from using a fidget if they have:

- ✓ difficulty paying attention, listening and following directions
- ✓ difficulty maintaining alertness (may exhibit "dazed" looks), holding still or staying in his/her seat
- ✓ difficulty keeping hands to themselves and staying in their own space

To help students learn how to self-regulate by using fidgets, ask questions such as:

1. How did having this fidget help you participate?
2. Why did you choose to use this fidget to do your assignment today? Did it help you or distract you?
3. What fidget could you try next time that may help you stay focused?
4. I noticed that this fidget seemed to help you get your work done. How did it make you feel inside? Why do you think it helped you?

- Novelty will always create excitement. Almost all new fidgets are novel and distracting. As a rule of thumb, try the fidget for two weeks with consistent guidelines for use. If after two weeks it is still more of a distraction/toy then a tool, it is not a good fidget item for that person at that time. It is a toy if it engages the imagination or attention of the child. A fidget supports sitting still and listening.
- Switch it up for something else. A successful fidget tool will not be the focus of a student's attention, but will be used in the background with the focus of attention being given to the instruction, activities and learning in the classroom.
- All fidgets should be taught with procedures and purpose
- Support students in self-regulating and recognizing when, and if, a particular fidget is helping him/her engage in learning.
- Just because the word fidget is included in the items name, does not mean it is an efficient fidget. If the item is more of a distraction and a toy, then a tool, it does not belong in the classroom as a 'fidget'.

For more information, click on icon:

Tactile Activities

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Key Practices to Enhance Children's Self-Regulation

- Be a detective! Try to figure out stressors, what helps the child stay calm and alert, what leaves a child hypo- or hyper-aroused?
- Exercise! Deep pressure and heavy work exercises are great.

Mindfulness Programs

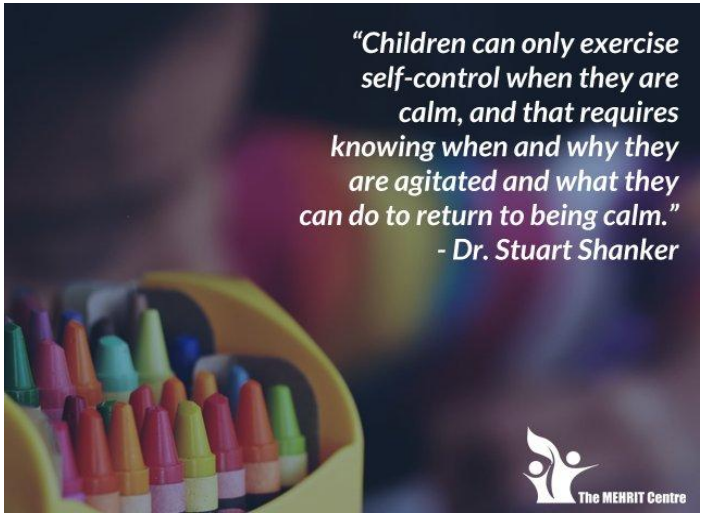
By using mindfulness principles, we can help children to identify their own arousal states. An example is "Your body is like a car engine, sometimes it runs **high**, **low** or **just right**." Once they begin to understand their own arousal states, we can help them learn how they can get to "just right" on their own.

  - A physical activity such as stretching, push-ups, or star jumps can be very regulating… if we make it fun!

- **Play**. When children create play out of their own interests, it is highly engaging. Play encourages communication about wants, and fosters connections between objects, people & ideas. Playing with others challenges them to think of others' perspectives and respond to these ideas. It is a challenge that children can take on which requires self-direction to keep going.

Build **meaningful relationship** to support self regulation

Self-regulation promotes thriving kids and thriving classrooms



For more information, click on icon:

Calm, Alert and Happy- Stuart Shanker

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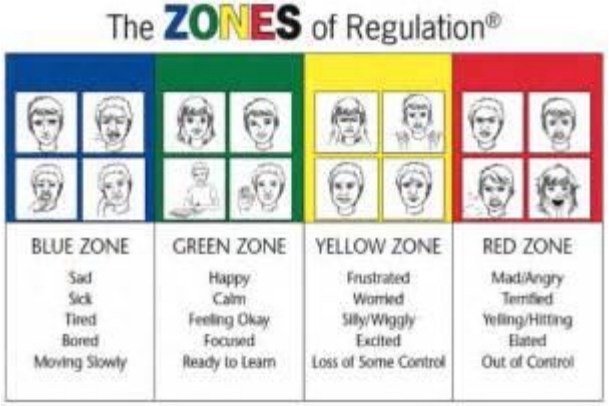
What is the Zones of Regulation ®?

The Zones of Regulation is a "systematic, cognitive behavior approach used to teach self-regulation and emotional control by categorizing all the different ways we feel and states of alertness we experience into four concrete zones. The zones curriculum provides strategies to teach students to become more aware of, and independently control their emotions, impulses, manage their sensory needs, and improve their ability to problem-solve conflicts. "The Zones of Regulation incorporates Social Thinking® (www.socialthinking.com) concepts and numerous visuals to teach students to identify their feelings/level of alertness, understand how their behavior impacts those around them, and learn what tools they can use to manage their feelings and states." (http://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html)



For more information, click on icon:

Zones of Regulation

Self Regulation

The Zones Framework

What it **is**

- A teaching tool
- A thinking framework
- A way to nurture development of skills
- Supportive in nature

What it **isn't**

- A discipline model
- A behavior approach

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USING YOUR MULTI-SENSORY ENVIRONMENT :

Questions to ask myself:

- ❑ Have I tried all available universal and targeted sensory strategies?
- ❑ Is my student unable to enter/stay in the appropriate zone for learning?
- ❑ Do I know how to use the room? What equipment is appropriate for the student?
- ❑ What is my goal for using the room with this student?
- ❑ Do I have a plan for transitioning the student back into the classroom?
- ❑ Am I providing ongoing discussion within the classroom about how different activities affect our ability to learn and behave (self-regulate)?
- ❑ Have I made my classroom as sensory-friendly as possible?

What you should NOT do:

- ❖ Use the room as a behavior modification/ management tool
- ❖ Use the room as a reward or punishment
- ❖ Use the room without a clear goal
- ❖ Use the room for longer than 60 min at a time
- ❖ Force a child to use a certain piece of equipment
- ❖ Force a child to stay in the room if they express desire to leave or show red flags
- ❖ Leave the student unsupervised

Who Should Use The Room?

1. Students whose sensory processing is impacting their participation in the classroom or who are not in the "just right" state for learning despite the use of appropriate tools
2. For students where it's difficult to incorporate enough sensory input into the day to meet their needs
3. Strong seekers of movement, touch, pressure
4. Are over-aroused (yellow or red zone) in the classroom
5. Bothered by noise, too many people, too much activity
6. Students with anxiety
7. Are under-aroused (blue zone) and do not actively seek activities to regulate his/her arousal; may appear tired, lethargic, slouched in desk

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DESIGNING A MULTI-SENSORY ROOM SESSION:

1. Identify your goal for using the room. Goals could include:
   - Achieving the "just right" state for learning (increased attention and engagement)
   - Decreasing anxiety, reducing agitation, general calming
   - Reducing distracted behaviours (fidgeting, getting up, touching others)
   - Encouraging vocalization, exploration, cause-effect learning
2. Come up with a tentative plan for which items in the room you think will support your goal
3. Room should be turned on in a slow, consistent, sequential order each time
4. Give student control of the amount of sensory input (where appropriate)
5. Some trial and error will likely be required to find the "just right" combination of tools to achieve the desired outcome (not all items need to be on for every child)
6. Stay in the room for the shortest amount of time possible to achieve regulation (30-50 minutes maximum)

RED FLAGS

- End the session immediately if any of the following are observed:
  - Sweating, flushing, dizziness, vomiting
  - Becomes overly excited or excessively active
  - Becomes lethargic, yawns repeatedly or falls asleep
- Do not use the room if the student has a pacemaker or seizure disorder

For more information, click on icon:

Calming and Alerting Activities

Winding The Session Down:

- Turn equipment off slowly and gradually – one at a time rather than all at once
- Gradually brighten the lights
- Ensure student is not returning to an overstimulating classroom
- Make notes on how the session went (student preferences, response to equipment, seeking/avoiding certain input)
- Ask for student feedback – describe how they feel; what zone they are in

Supporting Transition Back to Class:

- Provide access to in-class sensory supports
- Chill-out/retreat spaces, fidget tools, seating options, movement breaks, calming activities, head phones, study carrels, etc
- Limit distractions
- Avoid hanging things from the ceiling, only necessary information on walls/whiteboard, cover open shelving, keep classroom door closed
- Increase predictability
- Visual schedules, visual cues, visual timer, transition warnings

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Coordination Skills

Whether playing games, doing schoolwork, or taking part in sport activities, coordination skills are important in your student's daily life. Coordination usually refers to whether a student can get their arms and legs to work together in a coordinated, effective way. In addition, many tasks which require coordinated movement also require the student to have good motor planning to time their movements accurately.

There are 2 types of coordination skill activities that are particularly important:

- **Bilateral Coordination:** the ability to use both sides of the body together in a coordinated way. Bilateral tasks may involve the same movement from each side (symmetrical) or different movements from each side (asymmetrical). Some examples include tying shoes, drawing a line with a ruler, doing buttons, lacing, and cutting with scissors
- **Eye-Hand Coordination:** the ability of the eyes to guide the hands in movement. Some examples include catching a ball and hitting a ball with a bat, pencil skills, handwriting, visual-motor integration, reading and eye tracking skills.

What can you do to help develop your student's coordination skills? Practice. If the student struggles with an activity, help your student by making the task easier, such as breaking down each step involved in the activity.

- If you drop the activity altogether, try something different next time. Remember to come back to the difficult activity in a week or two.
- Give lots of encouragement and praise good attempts, even if they are not perfect. Ideas can include: "That was a good try!" or "You almost did it, well done!"
- Most importantly, keep it fun!

For more information, click on icon:

Eye-Hand Coordination

Bilateral Coordination

Have you heard of Developmental Coordination Disorder?

Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) is a motor skills disorder that occurs when a delay in the development of motor skills, or difficulty coordinating movements, results in a child being unable to perform common, everyday tasks.

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M.A.T.C.H. the Activity to the Child: Modify the task
This involves changing aspects of an activity that are too difficult for the child to perform. The important thing about modifying a task is that the child can still experience success if they make a genuine effort to participate in the activity.

Can Child Website.

"Frequently described as "clumsy" or "awkward" by their parents and teachers, children with DCD have difficulty mastering simple motor activities, such as tying shoes or going down stairs, and are unable to perform age-appropriate academic and self-care tasks. Some children may experience difficulties in a variety of areas while others may have problems only with specific activities. Children with DCD usually have normal or above average intellectual abilities. However, their motor coordination difficulties may impact their academic progress, social integration and emotional development."

"Developmental Coordination Disorder." Diagnoses. McMaster University, 2017,

The CanChild website is a great resource for teachers with students with coordination difficulties. Even if there is no diagnosis of DCD, the website provides valuable resources to support skill break down, task modifications, and task matching.

CanChild DCD Resources can be found at: https://canchild.ca/en/diagnoses/developmental-coordination-disorder

For more information click on icon:

Children with Developmental Coordination Disorder: At Home and in the Classroom

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Handwriting Without Tears (HWT)

A fun and engaging, **evidence based curriculum** to teach students the foundational skills to be successful communicators in the classroom

- Developed by OTs, teachers and field experts in early education
- Explicit handwriting program with pre-made lessons
- Follows a child's developmental progression
- unique letter order
- multi-sensory , hands-on
- Physical, movement-based learning

Benefits of using HWT

- Evidence-based
- Learning to print based on appropriate developmental progression = better school success
- Success with printing supports success with reading, writing, language use, and critical thinking.
- Students who used HWT made **significant improvements in test scores** across all skills measured in the Handwriting Without Tears (HWT) Screener.

For more information, click on icon:

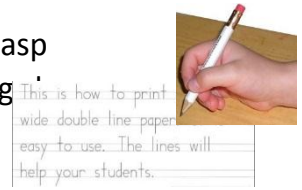
HWT Screener Example (1st Grade)

Pre-Printing Skills

Verbal Scripts for Letters

First step - foundations of printing as taught in HWT:

- ➢ Body awareness/ drawn organization:‘ mat man’
- ➢ Directional awareness: left, right, vertical, horizontal and diagonal concepts
- ➢ Efficient pencil grasp: Tripod pencil grasp
- ➢ Building blocks for letters: Pre-printing



Handwriting Strategies

- ➢ Uses double lined paper to support letter placement
- ➢ Teaches consistent formation patterns: Letters begin at the top and go down, left to right, counter clockwise, continuous stroke
- ➢ Multi-sensory activities before pencil to paper
- ➢ Letter grouping with a verbal script
  - ✓ Magic c (c a d g s o q)
  - ✓ Diver letters (h b p r n m)
  - ✓ Slider letters (k v w x y z)

- ➢ Encourages use of small pencils, crayons, markers for small hands (golf pencils, flip crayons/broken crayons, pipsqueak skinnies)

https://www.lwtears.com/hwt

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Learning Without Tears

- Researched based **curriculum** to teach students the foundational skills to be successful communicators in the classroom
- Mission: make learning and teaching easy and fun by providing superior educational products, training and materials to educators and families
- Grade-by-grade teacher guides
- 3 programs:
  - ✓ **Get Set for School (Pre-K)**
  - ✓ **Handwriting Without Tears (K-5)**
    *see previous slide
  - ✓ **Keyboarding Without Tears (K-5)**
    https://www.lwtears.com/

Get Set for School

- Play-based pre-writing **curriculum** to build skills in early numbers, math, language and literacy
- Simple and easy to use
- Step-by-step guide to teach numbers, geometry, patterns, algebra, measurement, time, probability, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, concepts about print, comprehension, language, writing

Children taught this program demonstrated mastery, showed more growth, and scored higher than peers

https://www.lwtears.com/gss

Keyboarding Without Tears (KWT)

Online curriculum to teach the developmental progression of computer strategies

- ✓ General computer readiness
- ✓ Digital citizenship
- ✓ Typing
- ✓ Online test prep
- ✓ Grade-level lessons
- ✓ Free online sample lessons
- ✓ Winner of Teacher Choice Award

Pre-keyboarding skills (grades K-2)

- ✓ Mouse functions (dragging, dropping)
- ✓ Dexterity and finger isolation
- ✓ Hand placement on home row
- ✓ Finger and key associations

Keyboarding skills (grades 3-5)

- ✓ Muscle memory
- ✓ Number and function keys
- ✓ Paragraphs and formatting

https://www.lwtears.com/kwt

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Keyboarding Considerations

Some prerequisite skills for keyboarding are the same as printing:

- Remain sitting (postural control)
- Use two hands together (bilateral coordination)
- Isolate a finger
- Recognize the letters
- Sequence letters in the correct order to form words

It is important to build the pre-keyboarding and keyboarding skills to allow students to be most successful with keyboarding long term.

Touch-typing vs hunt-and-peck:

- Hunt-and-peck is more convenient for students that are beginning to type. It allows them to learn the location of the keys when they are starting to type.
- Hunt-and-peck requires a high level of concentration directed to the keyboard rather than to the writing activity.
- Touch-typing is faster and allows the child to focus on the task.
- Touch-typing does take time to learn.

When to introduce touch typing?

- Students in kindergarten can start learning to click and drag with a mouse and correctly place their fingers on home row.
- Students as early as grade 1 can be introduced to touch-typing. This means they learn how to correctly use all of their fingers with typing.
- By Grade 4, children can type using all of their fingers without looking at the keys

How much practice is needed to improve keyboarding skills?

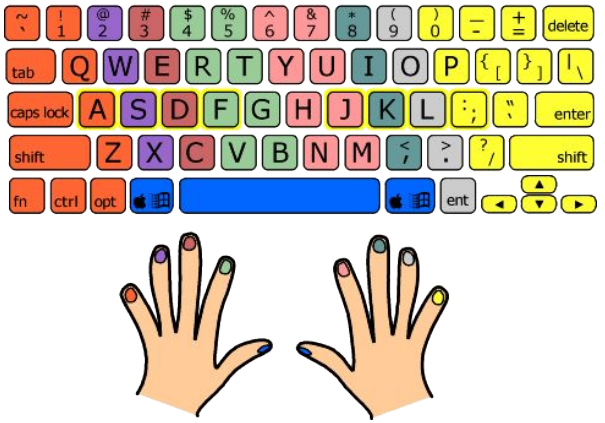
- Short (15-20) minutes sessions that are frequent (3-4) times a week is best

What to look for when choosing a keyboarding program?

- Students need to learn the location of the keys and build up speed and accuracy with repetition.
- A good review of keyboarding programs can be found at: http://www.superkids.com/aweb/pages/reviews/typing/
- One universal keyboarding program: Keyboarding without tears

When to use a regular vs. child sized keyboard?

- Does the student have a big enough hand span to reach all the keys on a regular keyboard to learn touch-typing? If not, then consider a child-sized keyboard.
- Child-sized keyboards can be purchased at Walmart, Amazon or other local office stores.



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Moving towards Assistive Technology as an Alternative to Printing

What is assistive technology for learning?

- Tools and strategies used to enhance learning.
- These can range from low technology option to high technology options (i.e. using true/false questions for student with difficulties with printing vs a computer).
- Assistive technology can be used to support learning or bypass challenging activities.

When to move towards keyboarding?

- When printing continues to be illegible after dedicated printing practice.
- When the printing concern impacts the child's enjoyment of writing or ability to independently share ideas.
- Often by grade 2 or 3 students are ready to learn to touch-type (use specific fingers to select keys on the keyboard).
- Please see Keyboarding Consideration and Keyboarding without tears for more information
- Consider completing a SETT document (link to RSCD website http://carcsd.ca/resources/forms-and-templates/) to gather additional information on the student's and their skills (strengths/needs) , environments (where do they go?), tasks(what would we like the student's to do?) and tools (what strategies/ supports the student at home or school?).

When can my student start using keyboarding as an alternative for writing?

- There will be a period of time where the student is building keyboarding skills and continuing to print or use a scribe to complete writing activities.
- Start with short daily keyboarding to build keyboarding skills
- When students' keyboarding is faster than their printing, then they can focus on using keyboarding for written expression.
- When students are using keyboarding as their main form of written expression, they should be able to access a computer (or word processor) any time it is needed.

Does keyboarding mean we are giving up on writing?

- No! Students can continue to build skills using paper and pencil.
- Keyboarding is another skill we want to develop as an alternate method of written expression.

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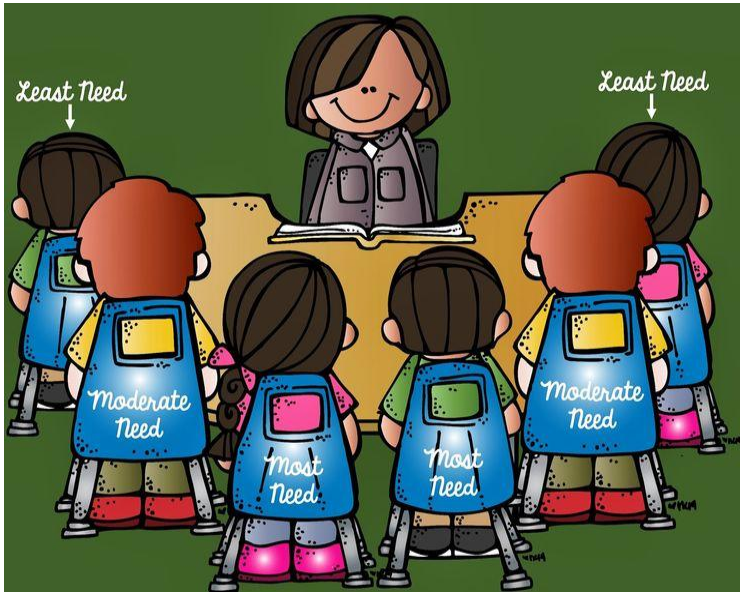
TARGETED PROGRAMS : How can I use TARGETED programming in collaboration with the OT for delivery of curriculum support to benefit identified students in my classroom?

Questions to ask myself:

- What would the benefit for using a targeted program in my class be?
- Do I have a small group of students with similar needs that would benefit from this kind of support?
- What do I expect to achieve by using this as a service delivery model?
- What strategies have I used to achieve outcomes in this regard?
- Who would be a partner in this setting?
- How can I build the targeted service delivery model into my class schedule?
- How can we address identified problems in this way and achieve curriculum outcomes?



Things to do:

- ✓ Identify a small group of students with similar needs.
- ✓ Determine how the identified needs impact curriculum outcomes
- ✓ Discuss at core team meeting
- ✓ Have a discussion with the SLP to determine whether an targeted modal could possibly meet the needs of the identified students.
- ✓ Set up time to meet, collaborate and plan programming that would meet the needs.
- ✓ Discuss an appropriate time and setting for the targeted group as well as continued discussions about the group.

For more information, click on

Targeted programming

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