



**SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH SENSORY  
PROCESSING CHALLENGES**

**A PERSPECTIVE ON OCCUPATIONAL  
THERAPY**

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## Sensations and Behavior

- Sensations can change our brain chemistry
- Sensations can be calming or alerting
- Like – dislike – don't care
- Avoid or approach
- Role of motivation in the learning process

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## Sensory Processing Disorder

- Neurological disorder in which the sensory information that the individual perceives results in abnormal responses
- Neurological “traffic jam”
- Interferes with all aspects of daily life: focusing, making decisions, self regulation, interacting, learning, etc

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## SPD subtypes

### Sensory modulation disorder

- Frequency, intensity, and duration
- Over-responsivity
- Under-responsivity
- Sensory Seeking/Craving

### Sensory based motor disorder

- Difficulty sequencing new motor actions; appears clumsy or demonstrates decreased endurance
- **Praxis: difficulty** planning, sequencing & executing novel or unfamiliar actions
- **Postural Disorder: difficulty** with quality of control or stabilization of the body during movement or at rest

### Sensory discrimination disorder

- Difficulty understanding the qualities of sensory information

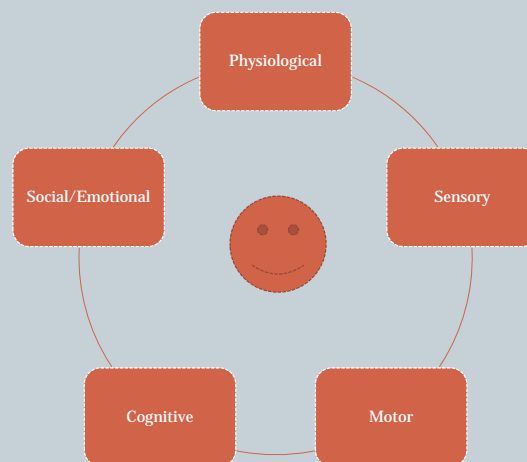
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## Regulation

- Our ability to remain alert and organized for the task at hand
- Educate yourself about the importance of regulation
- Engagement and learning require regulation
- Learn to recognize the signs of regulation vs. dysregulation
- Learn which situations and strategies lead to your child's dysregulation and which ones help him/her to regain a regulated state

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## Self Regulation

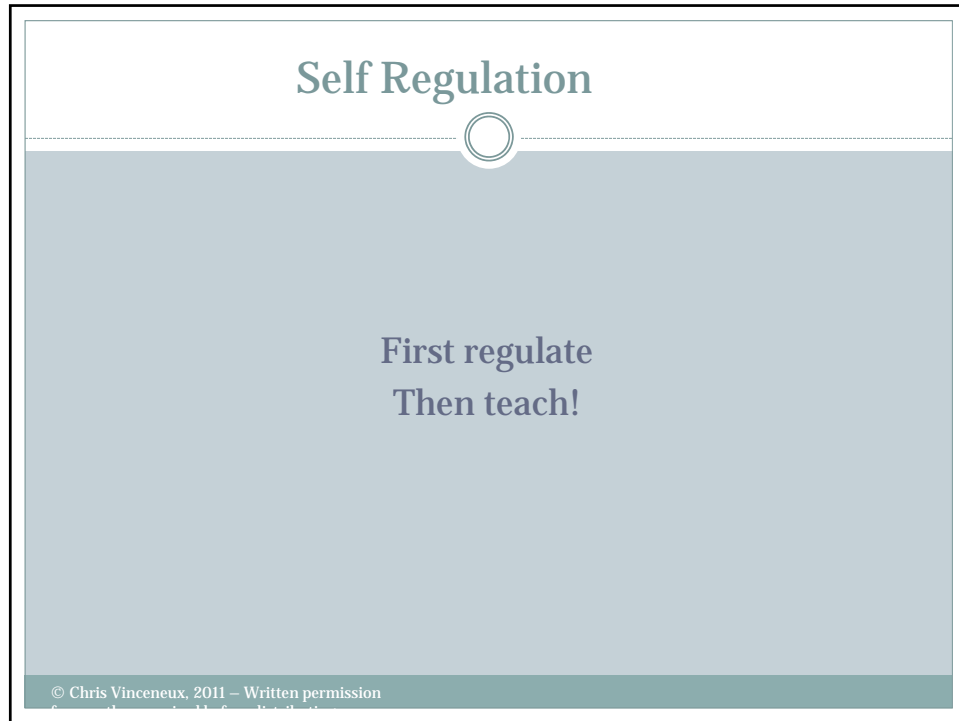


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## Self Regulation

First regulate  
Then teach!

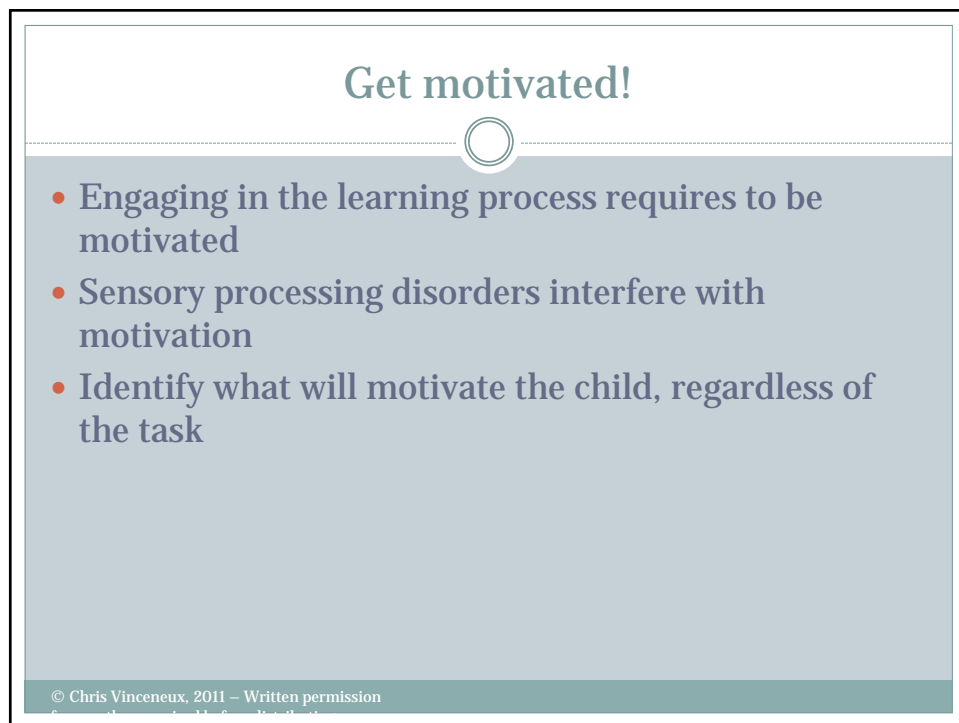
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## Get motivated!

- Engaging in the learning process requires to be motivated
- Sensory processing disorders interfere with motivation
- Identify what will motivate the child, regardless of the task

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## Creating motivation

- Approaching vs. Avoiding
- Create a hook
- Set up realistic expectations for the task
- Ensure success
- Spotlight the positive
- Understand which obstacles are present
- Provide all necessary supports

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## Types of supports

- Break things down; simplify
- Slow down
- Model
- Visual processing often stronger than auditory processing; provide visual supports as needed
- Keep things fun
- Giving clear roles
- Using declarative language; reduce questions; narrate what you see; share your thought process
- Balance predictability with novelty
- Provide opportunities for sensory input

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## Sensory driven behaviors

### Brain Priorities

- Avoid danger
- Avoid discomfort
- Seek pleasure
- Explore and learn

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## Identifying the “just right” amount of support

### Goal is to empower the child to:

- Feel confident and competent to explore, discover, and embrace challenging situations
- Build resiliency
- Develop ability to solve problems

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## Identifying the “just right” amount of support

### Impact of too much or not enough support

- Creates dependency on others, withdrawal, control
- Stifles child’s drive to explore and learn
- Doesn’t give child the opportunity to think on their own
- Interferes with the development of problem solving skills

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## General remediation goals

### Family

- Interpret behaviors from a sensory processing perspective
- Anticipate which situations might be difficult for the child
- Address the child’s sensory motor needs by providing adequate opportunities
- Identify the “just right” amount of support to maximize success
- Learn how to use the powerful techniques of guiding, modeling, inviting, and reflecting
- Maximize child’s independence; learn when to offer support or when to stand back
- Focus on quality of life

### Child

- Develop the building blocks needed to succeed in all areas (relationships, behavior, motor, academic, self-care, etc.)
- Develop self awareness
- Develop goal oriented actions
- Develop self confidence
- Develop problem solving skills
- Develop self-regulation
- Develop independence
- Become a joyful participant in life!

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## Occupational Therapy Services

- Evaluation
- Consultation
- Therapy
- Sound therapy
- Extender programs

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## Contact us!

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