



# June 2024 Newsletter

## Occupational Therapy for Sensory Regulation and Behavior Concerns in Children

When children arrive for an Occupational Therapy evaluation, parents often report behavioral challenges that are difficult to manage. When this is the case, our OTs work to determine underlying sensory processing challenges at play. Once uncovered, OTs provide children and families with unique strategies to overcome behavior concerns in their day to day environment. In this newsletter, one such family's experience is outlined.

### The Concerns

A parent reported that their young child could not sit still, liked to climb and jump off everything, did not listen to directions, had massive meltdowns, was rough with siblings/friends/pets, and was overall unsafe in daily interactions. This parent was concerned with their child's development, especially with social interactions and participation in school.



### The Explanations

The OT identified many signs of sensory processing difficulty in this child, explaining that the child's preference for rough play was actually a way of seeking sensory information. Over the course of several OT sessions, the therapist discovered that this child's system for judging force and pressure into muscles and joints was not in a "regulated" or balanced state.



## The Recommendations

Sensory processing looks different for every person, and strategies that work for one child may not work for another. Through calculated trial and error, the OT and child worked together to discover what kinds of activities provided THIS child's sensory system with more regulation. In this case, the child responded best to activities that involved :



pushing things, crashing onto the crash pad, climbing in a safe way, pushing themselves on a scooter board, lifting heavy items, and swinging in a hammock swing. After participating in these types of activities, the child's rough and dangerous behaviors decreased and they were able to participate in more parent led activities.



## The Takeaway

As the child and parent grew more confident in therapy, the OT began education on how to include sensory regulating activities at home. A few examples included:

- \*Pushing a laundry basket filled with some weight across the room
- \*Giving big bear hugs as the child allows
- \*Using pillows and cushions to jump onto or squish between



- \*Wearing a backpack filled with various items to provide heavy input to the body.

With continued work in OT and practice at home, this child was able to maintain a more balanced sensory system, decrease behaviors, and improve participation in daily activities alongside peers.

If this child's story sounds familiar - or if you believe your child would benefit from OT - call and speak with a member of our pediatric team, or visit our website at [taylorphysicaltherapy.com](http://taylorphysicaltherapy.com)



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