



Pediatric Development  
Center

Newsletter



2009

We provide occupational therapy evaluation, treatment and consultation for children with developmental delays, autism/Asperger, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, sensory processing disorders, attention, behavioral concerns, handwriting, and other areas of weakness.

Contact us for further information:

125 Presumpscot St. Portland, ME. (207) 699-5531

### **Parent Support Group:**

We want to support parents in any way we can and would like to have a monthly meeting to discuss your concerns. Please call the office to let us know when would be good for you and we will put together a meeting. 699-5531

### **Good Resources:**

[www.integrationscatalog.com](http://www.integrationscatalog.com)

[www.vitallinks.net](http://www.vitallinks.net)

### **Inclement Weather**

Throughout the winter we will experience snow and ice. Our office is usually open unless the weather is extremely bad. It is unpredictable how the day will go, whether the roads will clear early or a storm will come in later. Your therapist or the office will contact you to determine the best route of action. In case of very severe weather we will list a clinic closing on WCSH 6. Also, please remember to call if your child is sick and will not be coming to the clinic.

**Integrations catalog director Sue Wilkinson, OT, compiles "Bright Ideas" to offer great tips for helping you and your child make it through your daily routine:**

### **How Much Sleep is Enough?**

According to 2004 Sleep in America Poll, America is deficient. How is your child doing? And you? Did you know parents are supposed to get 8 hours sleep?

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
3-11 months	14-15 hours
12-35 months	12-14 hours
3-6 years	11-13 hours
School aged	10-11 hours

### **Trouble Getting a Child UP? KEEPING a Child Up?**

And, it doesn't seem to be a sleep shortage issue? If everything medical has been ruled out, it is probable the child's hanging-out in "low gear" is a symbol of sensory modulation disorder.

Parents can add intensity to the wake-up routine by playing Mozart in Motion Volume 3, placing lemon wedges on the nightstand for zingy morning bites, and zapping the morning air with peppermint essential oils. Morning exercises of "head and shoulders, knees and toes" puts the head upside down for extra sunny-side up input! Add lots of unpredictable movement and rotation throughout the day. Create jobs and chores at home and in the classroom that require cleaning with citrus-based sprays. Liberal amounts of intense spicy gum or tart and sour chew can "bring it up a notch!" Learn the routine well...this bright idea is perfect for sleep-deprived parents and teachers too!

### **What Does Sleep Have to do With School Performance?**

EVERYBODY already knows the answer. As a matter of fact, several of your children may have come to mind immediately. The quality of sleep can affect a child's entire day. And children with processing issues are more at risk for sleep disturbance than other kids.

Did you know the average person falls asleep within 15 minutes of going to bed? The two most common problems listed by those with sensory modulation disorder are difficulty calming enough to get to sleep and difficulty getting to or staying in, the "quenching" stages of sleep. Sensory integration therapy impacts the sleep issue, but the following tools offer support until integration occurs. It is

important to use sensory routines and tools that are a match for that particular individual's sensory system.

Having a consistent bedtime routine alone provides comfort in its predictability. Most people find a warm bath near bedtime relaxing. The Mozart Effect Relax, Daydream And Draw CD has been a lifesaver for many parents who have spent over 1-1/2 hours trying to get children asleep each night. Tucking children in or using weighted blankets is a form of "swaddling" that utilizes comforting touch input that's effective for many. Consider using a softly lighted visual calmer or some aroma input as well.



**"I Can Do It!"**

...are the most common words a person hears as a child with typically developing skills works on dressing. What if dressing skills are delayed? It is important to identify why those delays happen.

\* Sensory sensitivity may be present and the child's system may not be able to tolerate input, especially when sensitive areas are involved, like when washing their face, brushing their teeth or brushing their hair. Vibration may help these kids.

\* Some kids seemingly can't dress in less than an hour. Eek! Often, the issue is difficulty

focusing, and music for concentration helps. Sometimes the issue is organization and sequencing, and metronomes or drum music may help.

\* Muscles can have poor endurance, and the hands can have poor touch discrimination, making it difficult to use fasteners. Wake-up hands by clapping and rubbing fingers. Then try for fun by dressing dolls, putting on costumes with fasteners, or playing with toys that work on dressing skills.



### **A Trampoline Can Help With Toilet Training? Sounds Wacky!**

Children with sensory processing issues often have low muscle tone that is also present in the lower abdominals. Improved muscle tone often coincides with improved sensation. Consistent use of the trampoline, or even better, the inflatable Rody can result in successful toilet training. Rody is a play horse that effectively provides therapy for young children. Use Rody for bounce activities that tone muscles, improve balance and heighten cardiovascular exertion; available through Integrations.

### **20 Simple Ways to Make Transitions More Fun**

1. March to lunch.
2. Sing chanting or rhythmic songs in the car or on field trips.

3. Use a visual schedule to prepare for the day's transitions. Give a verbal reminder 5-10 minutes before.
4. Walk like an animal to calm the body.
5. Have the child keep track of transitions using a timer.
6. Enter the classroom through a tunnel at the door.
7. Keep a fidget on a keychain, or in a pocket.
8. Assign the child a "helping" task that involves carrying a heavy object.
9. Have children pull you with a harness.
10. Create a social story about big transitions.
11. Wear a weighted vest before and/or during your transition.
12. Take a sensory diet break before leaving.
13. Play follow the leader.
14. Provide fidget toys.
15. Crab Walk to change work areas in a classroom.
16. Use cordless headphones with modulation music.
17. Take a swinging break before starting the school day.
18. Jump on a trampoline before the transition.
19. Play calming music in the lunchroom, and use only natural light.
20. Hum a rhythmic song on a kazoo until you arrive.