Sensory Processing as Seen Through a Child's Eyes

Center for Persons With Disabilities

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SENSORY PROCESSING AS SEEN THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

Whether you are biting into an apple, riding a bicycle, or reading a book, successfully completing the activity requires a process called sensory integration.

Sensory integration, now called Sensory Processing, is a term that refers to the way the nervous system receives messages from the senses and turns them into appropriate motor and behavioral responses.

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) is a condition that exists when sensory signals don't get organized into appropriate responses. Occupational therapist and neuroscientist A. Jean Ayres, PhD, compares SPD to a neurological “traffic jam” that prevents certain parts of the brain from receiving the information needed to interpret sensory information correctly. For those identified as having SPD, sensory information may be perceived in a way that is different from most other people. A person with SPD finds it difficult to process and act upon information received through the senses, which creates challenges in performing countless everyday tasks.

SPD is a very complex condition and can be difficult to diagnose without expert evaluation. Research tells us that it is more common in children than we may realize. Recent studies have identified that at least 1 in 20 children’s daily lives is affected by SPD, and as many as 1 in every 6 children experiences sensory symptoms that significantly interfere with everyday life functions.

A video produced by the Utah Parent Center and funded through the CPD helps to explain what SPD is and how it affects children's lives. Narrated by a child with SPD, A Child’s View of Sensory Processing helps us to see it through his eyes and see first hand how it affects the way his body processes sensory information.