

Helping Kids



Health Care & the Skills of Living for Children

Personal Message

Why is my child doing that?

Children are so different that it is often difficult to tell what is typical and not typical. At ABC Pediatric Therapy Network, we often get such calls from parents, inquiring what exactly is “normal”. Common questions often are in regards to children’s behavior. Many behaviors are typical, but there are some that we start to probe a bit further. In the following articles, you will receive information regarding a disorder that is affecting many children and is on the rise—dysfunction of sensory integration or DSI.

DSI typically presents as children who have difficulty with attention, fidget a lot, aggressive or fearful, problems following directions, just to name a few! Some children are also very picky eaters or can’t stand certain textures or sounds. Sensory integration dysfunction can cross many functional areas: language, gross motor or fine motor skills. A child may be able to perform well with gross motor skills but falls apart with language or fine motor skills.

All of our therapists are trained in using sensory integration treatment during their therapy sessions. Sensory integration therapy involves using movement to improve the integration of the senses for

improved output. It is a child friendly treatment approach that involves activities that children love to engage in. Evaluation involves standardized testing as well as parent report and much observation. Treatment length and frequency is dependent on the severity of the need, but is individualized with the child and family’s schedules. In addition, families are given many home program ideas so they can address the child’s behavior and speed progress. Often, after the initial visit, a family goes home with many techniques to use that will impact the child immediately. Other aspects of the child’s life are also monitored to make sure they are successful in every situation. We hear from many families that a child will do well at gymnastics class but falls apart in school.

Whatever the concern, our therapists at ABC Pediatric Therapy Network can help a family to provide an opportunity for success for their child no matter what.

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Susan Baenziger, Diane Crecelius
—owners, ABC Pediatric
Therapy Network

What is Sensory Integration



Sensory integration develops in everyone from infancy to adulthood. It is how we learn to stay awake when we need to be listening...

As a parent, teacher, or caregiver you want the best for your children. You want to make sure they have everything they need for a successful start and healthy development. It is important not only to look at a child's physical development but a child's sensory development as well. Have you ever wondered why your child acts differently to daily tasks that don't seem to bother others? Questions parents often ask include:

- Why can't my child sit still?
- Why do the tags in my child's clothes bother him/her?
- Why is my child always getting in trouble at school?
- Why does my child have difficulty with changes in routine?
- Why is my child such a picky eater?

It may be that your child has difficulty with sensory integration. Sensory integration develops in everyone from infancy to adulthood. It is how we learn to stay awake when we need to be listening by tapping our foot or chewing gum. It is how we learn to focus on a task and not all the noises in the background.

Sometimes children demonstrate difficulty with sensory integration. They may demonstrate bad behaviors when in noisy environments or seem to become over stimulated and unable to calm themselves. Too often children are looked at as just being "bad" or "acting out". It is important to consider that a child may have sensory integration dysfunction.

Listed below you will learn more about sensory integration. If you have any questions regarding your child's sensory development you should contact your pediatrician for guidance. They will be able to answer your questions or refer you to a pediatric occupational therapist. When a delay is identified early it can be handled quicker and easier.

WHAT IS SENSORY INTEGRATION?

Simply speaking, sensory integration is the ability to take in, sort out, and connect information from the world around us. The information we take in comes through our senses. In development sensory integration function takes place at an automatic level. In other words, you don't

have to think about it. Without effective sensory integration we are not able to interact comfortably with the world around us.

WHAT IS SENSORY INTEGRATION DYSFUNCTION?

Sensory integration dysfunction occurs when the child cannot analyze, organize, and respond to sensory messages accurately. Children with sensory integration dysfunction may present with difficulties with development, behavior, speech, and the ability to process information. Some common characteristics of sensory integration dysfunction include:

- Difficulty maintaining attention to task
- Clumsiness, frequent falling
- Difficulty with transitions
- High or low activity levels
- Social/emotional issues
- Delays in motor skills
- Delays in communication
- Impulsive
- High distractibility
- High or low pain tolerance
- Unusual eating habits (i.e. picky eater)
- Aggression towards self or others
- Difficulty with multiple step directions

HOW IS SENSORY INTEGRATION DYSFUNCTION TREATED?

A pediatric occupational therapist will assess the child and family needs, conduct a family interview, and observe the child's responses to input from the environment.

Tips and Tricks

1. Providing children fidget toys during sit down activities can help children maintain attention to task. Some examples of fidget toys are stress balls, Chewy Tubes, vibrating toys, or a Tangle Toy. It can be helpful to make a fidget box that can be easily transported to the car, in a restaurant, or anywhere else a child is asked to sit still.



2. Providing children with movement opportunities allows a child to attain an appropriate level of alertness. If your child enjoys movement allowing them to swing or do jumping jacks before homework activities can increase participation.



3. When children become over stimulated it is important to provide them with calming sensory input.

Some examples include designating an area the child can use as a hideout, such as a quiet corner, listening to rhythmical music, and using low level lighting.



4. Providing activities that include heavy jobs can develop stabilization for coordination, and promote attention, focus, and calmness. Examples of heavy jobs include carrying books or laundry, pushing or pulling activities, or doing animal walks.



5. Providing up and down movements (jumping rope, bouncing on a ball or trampoline) may help your child wake up. While back and forth movements (swinging, or rocking chairs) can be used for calming.



Sensory integration therapy is child-directed and focuses on sensory areas specific to each child's needs. Each child is encouraged to participate in a variety of sensory activities to facilitate the development of underlying skills needed to complete higher level tasks efficiently and independently.

Treatment sessions encourage parent/child interaction with positive sensory experience (touch, movement, visual). A sensory program specific to the child's sensory need will be developed for home and school.

FAQ

- Frequently Asked Questions About Pediatric Therapy

1. Why doesn't my child ever follow my directions or do what I say?

Being able to follow directions is called motor planning. Many children have difficulty following multi-step motor plans because they can't break tasks down into simple steps. They may look like they are being "bad", but simply are unable to break the task down.

2. Why does my child hate certain pieces of clothing?

a. Often children are tactilely defensive. This means that they do not like certain textures, temperatures or they way certain things feel. Their feeling may be so extreme that they refuse to wear certain pieces of clothing or refuse to engage in "typical" child behavior—like play in the sand or in the water.

3. Why does my child play so rough with other children?

a. Children who play extremely aggressive often are seeking sensory input. Crashing, jumping and bumping into others feels good to them, and no matter how often you tell them to stop, its difficult for them to stop because it feels good!! These children often have difficulty grading their movements— all or nothing.

4. Why does my child avoid being in groups or seems to have a lot of fears?

a. Some children have difficulty with tasks in groups because they don't like to be touched by others-tactile defensiveness. Some need tasks to move in a slow methodical rate so they can react and plan better, but in a group, the other children do not want to wait for that child who wants to "slow down" .

CALL YOUR PEDIATRIC THERAPIST:

Take this simple test...Does your child exhibit these characteristics?

YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child have difficulty with transitions between places, activities, or people?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is your child sensitive to touch, sound, light, or smells?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child have difficulty maintaining attention to task?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child have unusually low or high activity levels?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child display delays in communication or an inappropriate response to social situations?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child have difficulty recovering or calming self when upset?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is you child a picky eater or shows strong preferences to certain foods?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child appear clumsy or uncoordinated with daily tasks?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child have difficulty following multiple step directions?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child avoid or seek movement opportunities that interfere with daily tasks?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child have a vocabulary of 1500 or more words?

Results

If you answered no to any of these questions, please come in for a free screening.



Featured Therapist

Vanessa Bird, OTR/L



Vanessa Bird, OTR/L is one of the Occupational Therapists at ABC Pediatric Therapy Network who specializes in Sensory Integration. She joined ABC Pediatric Therapy Network in 2004 after returning from Haiti; where she developed and operated an occupational therapy program for the children of Haiti. She attended Saint Louis University where she received her Bachelors of Science in occupational

therapy. Vanessa's focus in occupational therapy has been centered around sensory integration as well as the visual processing centers of the brain and their impact on function. Vanessa currently lives in Mason with her new puppy Sadie. In her spare time Vanessa enjoys traveling around the country watching Reds baseball.

SUCCESSES **What parents are saying...**



After 6 weeks of occupational therapy our little boy began speaking which immediately improved his confidence and his

behavior problems...Our little boy used to only be happy when he was at home with mom and dad. This new found confidence that came with speech and motor skills allows everyone to see his cheerful and loving personality.
-Gwenn

For the first time our little boy seemed responsive to speech therapy because his sensory

needs were also being met. The enthusiasm, knowledge, and fun his therapist brought to each session immediately produced results. For once he was excited to go back to "therapy".
-Amy

I was hesitant at first when I thought my son needed occupational therapy thinking that he would just grow out of his sensory and postural issues.



Now I couldn't imagine where he would be right now if he didn't have therapy. He has shown improvements in his behavior, posture, and eating habits. I am so glad I enrolled him in therapy.
-Mindy

My son learned to transition from one activity to another
-LeeAnne

Need Help For Your Child?



Come and visit us for a FREE CONSULTATION

Find out how pediatric therapy can help you restore health and gain the skills of living for your child.

Call us today at (513) 755-6600 for your no-charge consultation



ABC Pediatric Therapy Network

About ABC Pediatric Therapy Network:

ABC is a multidisciplinary pediatric therapy practice that integrates physical, occupational, and speech therapy services in an innovative and child – driven manner. Our state of the art facility provides 11,000 square feet of fun; including a 30x12x15 foot jungle gym, foam pit, rock wall, and other developmental equipment.



Why choose ABC Pediatric Therapy to provide your child's therapy services?

The mission of ABC is to provide our families with the highest level of quality care in a nurturing and compassionate environment. Here are some of the unique features we offer:

- Multidisciplinary approach – All therapists work coherently to accomplish the greatest level of achievement for each child. Whether the child is receiving one discipline or all disciplines, our experience across therapies will promote overall improvements in the gross motor, fine motor, and communication areas.
- Home programming – Therapists assist parents/caregivers in developing successful strategies and exercises; which encourage greater independence and participation in all areas of functioning.
- Innovative treatment approach – Therapists integrate positive components of traditional therapeutic methods with innovative and creative treatment techniques and equipment.
- Convenient location – We are located within a few miles of I-75 at the Union Centre Blvd exit, just north of Cincinnati and I-275.

WE CARE ABOUT YOU AND YOUR CHILD!

**Call us today for a free consultation at
(513) 755-6600**

**Why is my
child doing that?**
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