



Pacific Coast Speech Services, Inc. February 2014

Using Sensory Integration in Therapy



QUIET HANDS!! EYES UP HERE!! How many times have you said these words? Wouldn't you like to say them a little less frequently?

As SLPs, we are constantly looking for new ways to motivate and support consistent student attention. However, all kids are still developing neurologically and some may have sensory processing issues. We may need to provide more, or less, sensory stimulation to help them focus on tasks. Yes, this falls primarily in the world of occupational therapy, but how can you help them manage in your room? Modifying the sensory conditions for students can make a big difference in their ability to make progress. Here are some quick and easy steps you as a school SLP can take to address sensory needs:

- Pick the brain of your OT for suggestions on specific kids or general sensory need variations. Ask for copies of articles she shares with parents. If appropriate, ask the parent what tools they have found calming for their child- can you use a similar method?
• Set a goal to build movement and physical stimulation into every session. Can the activities vary from fine motor to whole body? Are you mindful that small changes such as turning on music and changing lighting can help some students?
• Do a quick scavenger hunt at school and home to gather a sensory tool kit! There are many types of sensations that may be "sought" or "avoided," but they fall into three categories: tactile, proprioceptive, and kinesthetic. You don't need to buy a lot of expensive items - start small with current therapy items, or materials you have at home or school. Some suggestions:
• Tactile: strips of fabrics, balloons filled with rice or birdseed, springs, a combination lock, Velcro pieces stuck under the table or chair, painter's tape, rope, ribbons, an old silk flower, a robot.
• Proprioceptive: rubber or resistance bands, old squash or squeeze balls, Nerf basketball hoops, whole body toys.
• Kinesthetic: juggling balls, hacky sacks, exercise balls, the controlled use of a spinning desk chair after a certain number of responses.
• Some students are sensory averse. These students may thrive with their chair further away from the others, headphones or ear plugs to dampen sound, or other tools.

As you and the team are establishing what types of sensation or sensation avoidance are most essential, consider how to best meet that need in an unobtrusive way. For example:

- if a student wants to rub and touch objects, can you put Velcro or rope out of sight under the table for him to touch? If he has trouble staying in his chair, would a Flexistrap between the chair legs help? Try various methods in consult with your OT, but seek solutions that are less likely to draw attention.
• Be mindful of sensations throughout the session. Changing a token reinforcer from a smooth glass stone to a Lego block can refocus attention and add interest to the activity.
• Make sure you consider all learning environments. If a student needs a fidget at the speech table, what about other environments? Is it possible that social skills on the playground would be improved with a discreet sensory item? If yours is working, could the student "borrow it"?
• Consider how sensory needs change from day to day and moment to moment. For certain students, it may be helpful to work with the OT on a hierarchy that the student can use when more or less stimulation is needed for emotional balance.
• In the case of a student who receives OT services, consider doing some joint sessions to learn more about this critical area, and aid in generalization.

These suggestions are only a start, but they may be the next step you need to begin better integration of services and increase session success. Check our Pinterest for more suggestions.

Featured Website

What does the fox say???



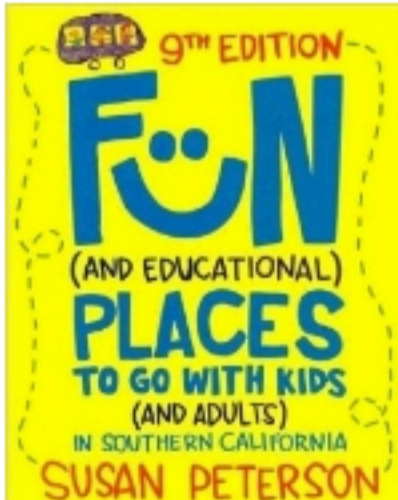
Chapel Hill Snippets is written by Ruth Morgan, a school district SLP, with contributions from the other SLPs in her district. With California moving to Common Core Curriculum, we especially loved their FREE teacher rating forms by grade level, which offer a quick and easy way for us to gather information before IEPs. Looking for a fun activity that could easily incorporate movement? Check out her "What Does the Fox Say" Smartboard activity.

Featured Website for Apps



New iPad? Have parents who are requesting help choosing apps? Here are two handy lists of available apps- divided by goals! Speech Gadget's Apps by Goals or Consonantly Speaking Apps By Goals. Fantastic resources! For even more of our favorite sources, visit the PCSS Pinterest page on Apps.

Featured Book for Fun Ideas



Fun Places to Go With Kids (and Adults) is an incredible resource for anyone who wants a 15-minute or full-day adventure in Southern California. What makes it special? Ms. Peterson has described a total of 2,500 places of interest within Southern California. Best of all, she has indexed them by city, price, time needed, and theme!

Like dinosaurs? She has listed ten places to go in Southern California. Firefighting? Farms? Insects? American History? All are mapped out for you with websites, phone numbers, and comments about content. 5 Stars from Amazon and the PCSS staff!!

Tip Sheet for Clinical Fellows & Supervisors



Congratulations to those of you who are graduating in June and August. You have nearly made it through the gauntlet! The next step in your journey is a whole lot of new paperwork and decisions. Temporary Licenses? Preliminary Credentials? Degree conferment? CF paperwork? You will get through it, but it can be confusing.

If you are a grad student, or supervise interns, click on the Pacific Coast Speech Services-Welcome to the Field Clinical Fellows handout for job search tips, quick answers to common paperwork questions, and advice on judging supervision when interviewing. While you are there, you might want to review our other resources, including our popular Bell Curve and other suggestions for both clinical fellows and licensed clinicians.

Jokes for Kids



We know your favorite part of our newsletter is the kid jokes, but did you know that you can get PCSS curated kid jokes on Twitter? Follow us on @PCSSinSoCal for a morning kid joke. Here are three of our recent favorites.

What does a piece of toast wear to bed? His pa-JAM-as!

What did Baby Corn say to Mama Corn? Where's Pop-Corn?

What do moose eat for breakfast? The MOOOOOOOOOOOOOO-spaper!