

Tips for Teachers

Sensory integration is an innate neurobiological process that refers to the interpretation of sensory stimulation from the environment (Ayres, 1979). When a child has a Sensory Processing Disorder, information from the environment and one's own senses are not organized well in the brain. This results in problems in processing information and behaving appropriately for the task at hand.

The following tips can help children who are oversensitive to light touch and who need movement to stay organized in the classroom. What's wonderful about these ideas is that they work well for all children and help them attend to and process academic information.

General Classroom Organizational Strategies

- Use graph paper to help organize math problems.
- Provide lined paper for writing assignments.
- Provide pencil grippers for children who have trouble using a mature pencil grasp.
- Remind children to use their non-dominant hand to hold the paper.
- Adjust chairs and tables to the proper height for each child. (Feet should touch the floor. Table height should be just below the child's elbow when the fist rests under the chin.)
- Keep visual and auditory distractions to a minimum.
- If a child presses too hard on the pencil, give him a mechanical pencil.
- Always present information in the child's best modality. Visual, auditory, or multi-sensory learning activities can facilitate understanding and memory.

Children Who are Oversensitive to Light Touch

Children who are sensitive to light, unexpected touch often prefer firm touch/pressure, which helps organize their behavior. Keep the following tips in mind:

- Approach the child from the front to give a visual cue that light touch is coming.
- Use a firm pressure to the shoulder or back, rather than a gentle hand placement or a brush to the sleeve, arm, or face.