

# Sensory Integration Therapy

## at The Children's Therapy & Learning Center



Every day, we experience the world through the sensations of touch, movement, body awareness, sight, sound and the pull of gravity. Sensory integration refers to the brain's capacity to organize, filter and interpret sensory information and use it in a meaningful way. The ability to focus on a teacher in the classroom or complete homework proficiently, in a timely manner, and with distractions in the background offer two examples of using good sensory integration. Sensory integration lays the foundation for later development of more complex learning, behaviors and functional skills. A child with a sensory processing disorder struggles with many everyday activities because of a communication disconnect between the brain and information received vis-à-vis the senses. Children who are not treated for a sensory processing disorder may have difficulty later with motor coordination, behavior, attention, studying, learning, and school activities, and they may eventually suffer from anxiety, depression, and social challenges.

The good news is that sensory integration therapy can help! **The Children's Therapy & Learning Center** individualizes sensory-based therapy programs for each child to develop an underlying foundation for effective sensory processing. Treatment improves joint attention, organization of behavior, adaptability, focusing abilities and overall skills for success in various environments.

### Possible Signs of Sensory Processing Dysfunction:

- Overly sensitive OR under-reactive to touch, motion, sights, sounds or smells
- Unusually fearful of movements or heights (i.e., swings, climbing, rough housing)
- Easily distracted and difficulty focusing or sitting still
- Unusually high or low activity level for a child's age
- Impervious to sensations that most would notice (i.e., craving constant motion, not noticing pain, over-stuffing their mouth or being a picky eater)
- Difficulty transitioning between two tasks or between environments
- Confused by spatial concepts needed to write nicely and understand left and right
- Poor body awareness and positioning; clumsy; low self-esteem
- Impulsive, lacking self-control, and doesn't think before acting
- Difficulty with tasks requiring touch, such as tying a shoe, playing with toys with small pieces, or using appropriate force to write or to throw a ball
- Delays in academic achievement; often appears learning-disabled despite intelligence
- Delays in speech, language and overall motor skills and socialization

If you are concerned about a child's sensory processing, we encourage the child to receive a comprehensive assessment from a Licensed Occupational Therapist with specific experience in *Sensory Integration Therapy*. An evaluation typically consists of both standardized and non-standardized assessments, interviews with parents, teachers and caregivers, and clinical observation of the child's responses to sensory input.

