



Understanding Sensory Sensitivities

Stephanie Leonard
Australian Gifted Support

www.australiangiftedsupport.com

stephaniemsm@gmail.com



Sensory sensitivity can impact on your child's everyday experiences.

In some cases it will affect your child's ability to

- **learn**
- **form friendships**
- **interact appropriately in play activities.**



The Five Senses ? ? ? ? ?

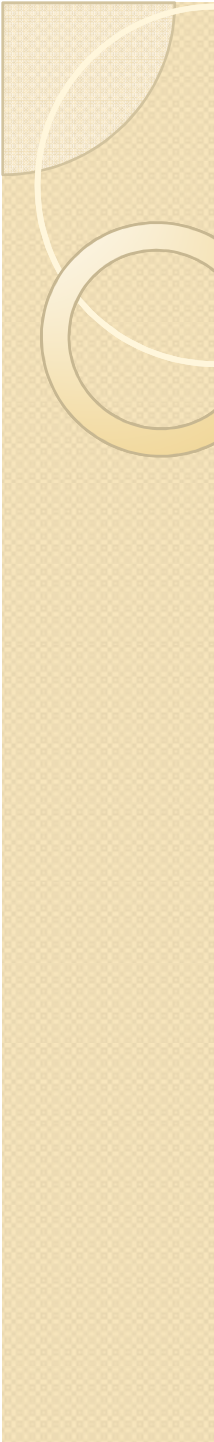
Only 5 ?

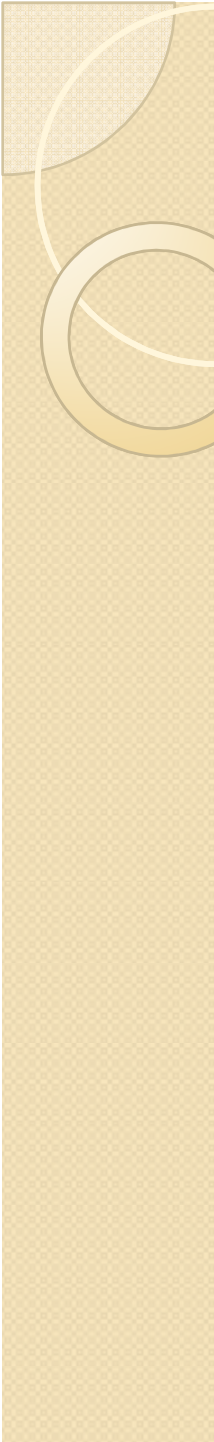
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUn7zy8Ya20&p=Ak70GeqUCz8>



SENSORY SYSTEM

- Tactile (touch)
- Visual (sight)
- Auditory (hearing)
- Gustatory (taste)
- Olfactory (smell)
- Vestibular (balance)
- Proprioception (body awareness)

- 
- Children with Sensory Sensitivities have difficulty:
 - CHOOSING
 - ORGANISING
 - RESPONDING APPROPRIATELY



What is Sensory Integration?



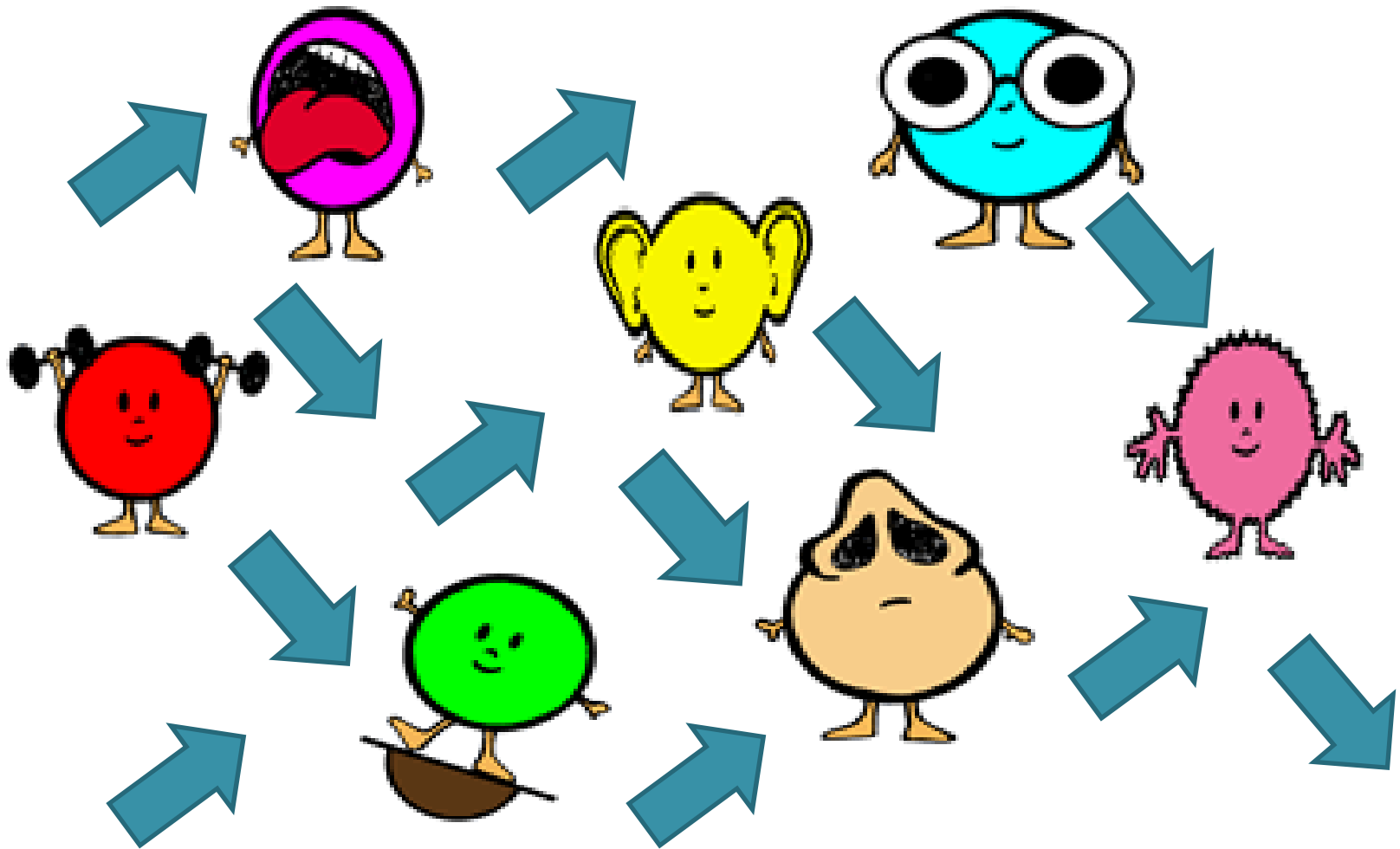
SENSORY INTEGRATION

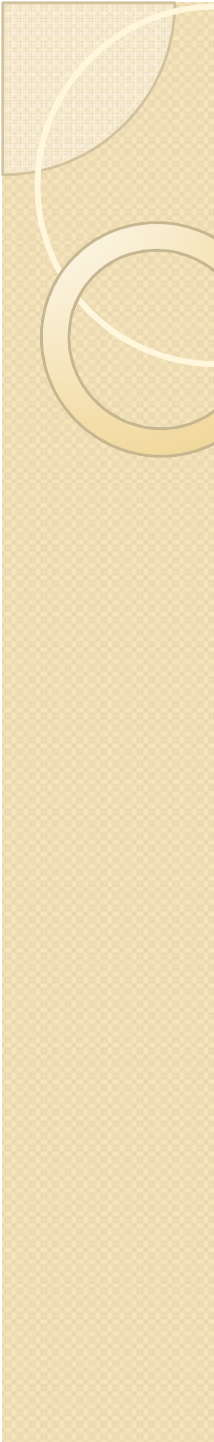
- WHO you are
- WHERE you are
- WHAT is happening around you

Out of your comfort zone.



SENSORY OVERLOAD





**For most of us, sensory
integration occurs without
conscious thought or effort.**

SENSORY INTEGRATION

- Our brain organises input from all senses at the same time and guides us through our actions to respond appropriately.





Sensory Diet

“... our bodies need a balance of sensations in order to help us make sense of the world and be our most alert, adaptive and skilful.” (Wilbarger, 1984)

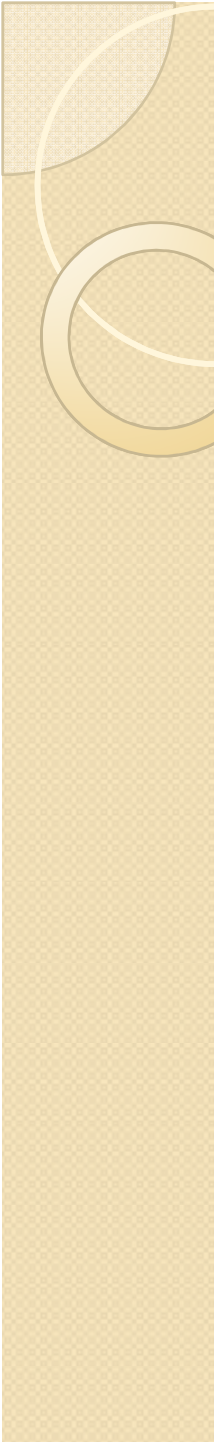
Children with sensory sensitivities do not have a balanced sensory diet.



Children with sensory sensitivities:

- do not have a balanced sensory diet
- have very strong likes and dislikes
- reactions to sensory input differ from typically expected responses





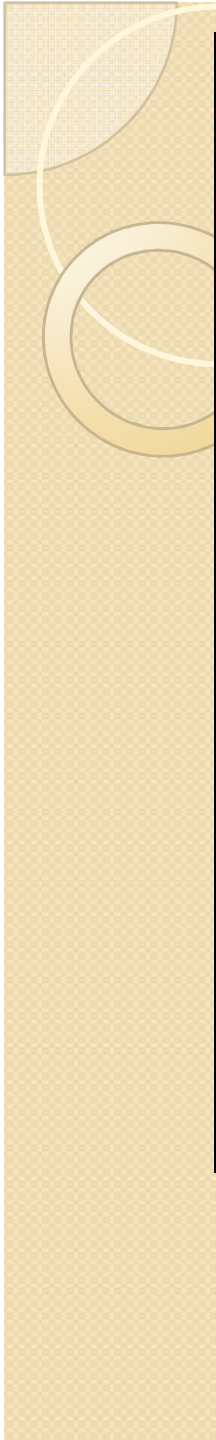
**“It was raining
lightning strikes at
school today.”**



Identify the hidden message

In your child's

- Inattentiveness
- Disruption / Misbehaviour
- Over / Under responsiveness



**Reach
me**



Use disruption to identify

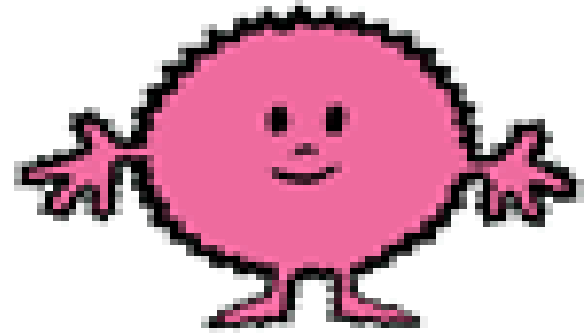
What you are catching them doing “wrong” may be the clue you need to discover what strategies would help your sensory sensitive child.



Strategies for Over/Under Sensory Responsiveness

- At Home
- In the Classroom
- In public

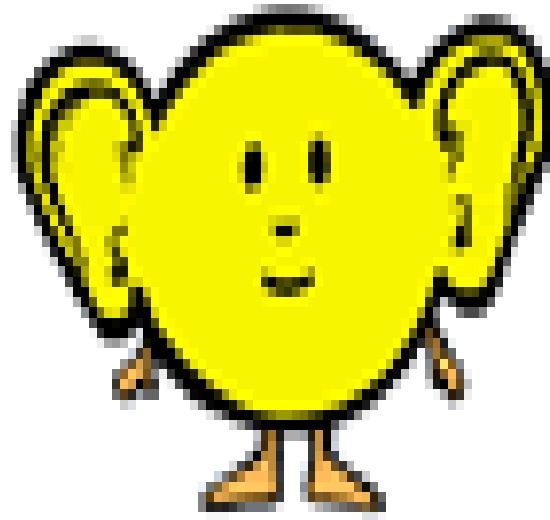
Tactile (touch)



Visual (sight)



Auditory (hearing)



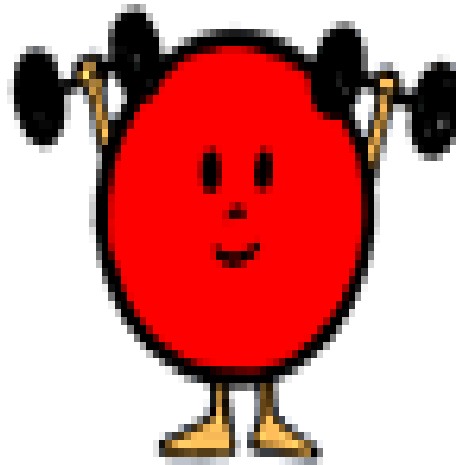
Gustatory (taste)



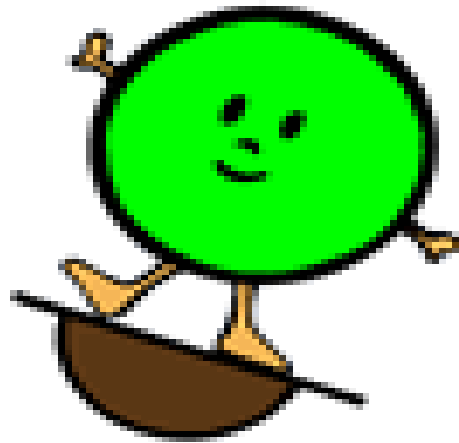
Olfactory (smell)



Proprioception (body awareness)



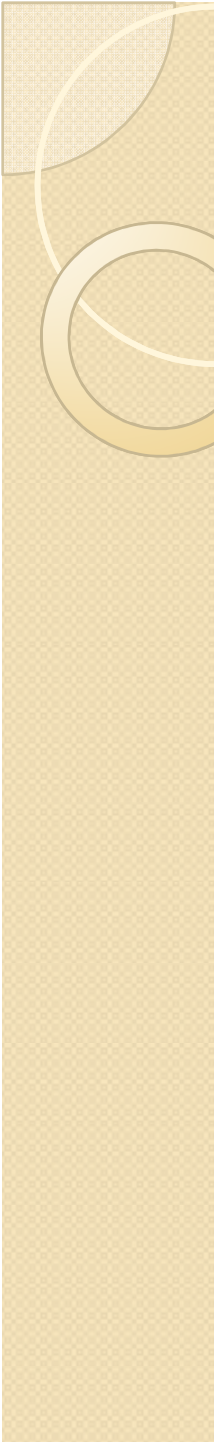
Vestibular (balance)





Imagine what it's like to be me....

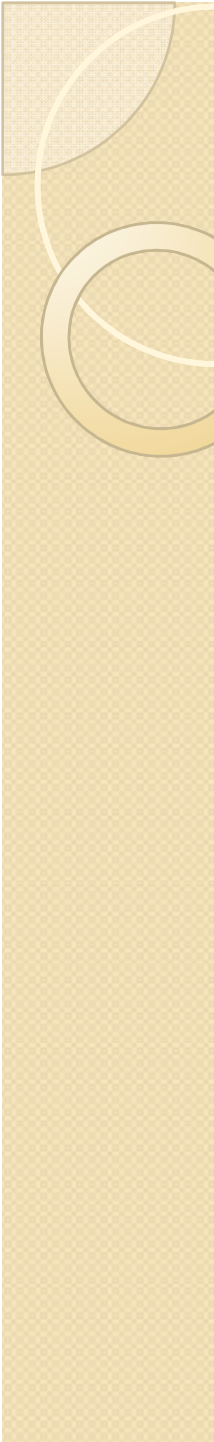
- Max
- SONG: "Through My Eyes"



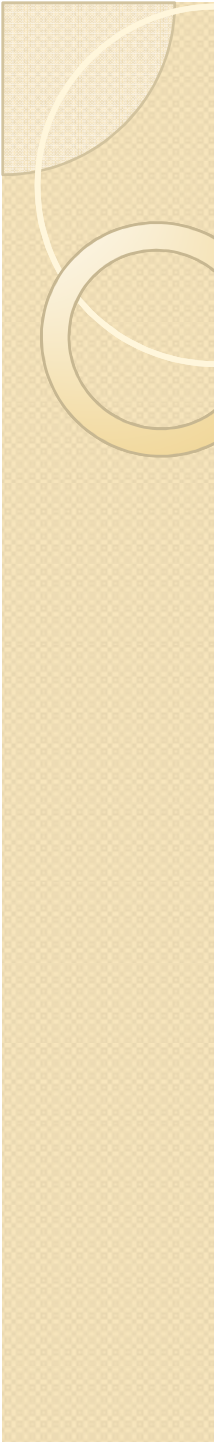
**Imagine what it's
like to be
me.....**



**“I’m not blind but I
can’t always see.”**



**“I’m not deaf but
sometimes things
sound so strange
to me.”**



The essential first step
toward helping your
child with sensory
sensitivities is to
develop empathy
for **how they**
experience
the
world.

