



Blossom

Children's Occupational Therapy

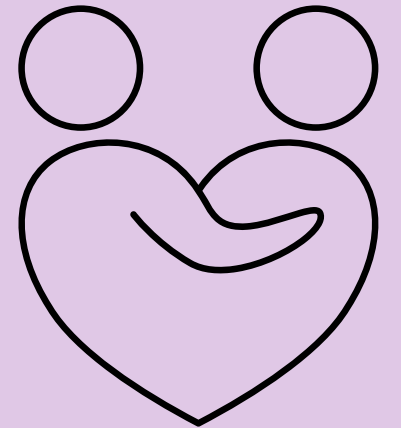
THE TACTILE SENSORY SYSTEM (TOUCH)

What is the Tactile system?

- The tactile system is responsible for processing touch, vibration, temperature and pain from the skin and other tissues. It enables us to perceive and interact with our environment through physical contact.
- There are 3 types of touch:
 1. Light touch - Can be alerting for some, and for those who are sensitive to light touch, it can feel painful and can elicit an emotional response
 2. Discriminative touch - enables us to understand the type of touch i.e.. wet, dry, hot, cold
 3. Deep pressure touch - can be calming for some

What are the functions of this system?

- Protection and safety
- Attachment and bonding
- Emotional regulation
- Oral motor control
- Body scheme
- Motor planning
- Visual perception
- Fine and gross motor skills
- Posture and balance



Under-responsive tactile system i.e. we seek additional tactile sensory feedback:

- Seeks touch i.e. others / objects and can't keep their hands to themselves
- Mouths non food items
- seeks out messy play opportunities

What to look out for

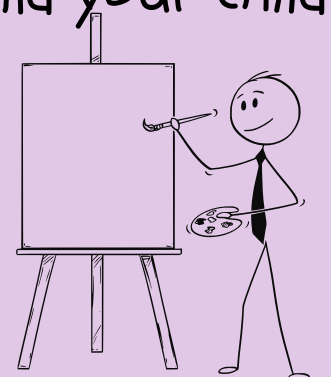
Over-responsive tactile system i.e. sensitive to tactile sensory information:

- Pulls away from being touch unexpectedly
- Distressed by the feel of labels / new clothes
- Avoids messy play opportunities
- Dislikes brushing their teeth
- Dislikes washing / drying, hair brushing and hair washing
- Dislikes nail cutting
- Dislikes specific food textures



Activity suggestions to help

- Massage (with or without lotions)
- Weighted / compression items as guided by an OT
- Bath / shower and wrap a warm towel around your child
- Tactile bins
- Play dough
- Painting / edible painting
- Feely bag games
- Baking
- Dress up games / button / zipper strips / busy boards
- arts and crafts
- Fidget items
- messy play / water play / dried textures
- crunchy / chewy foods
- If your child has tactile difficulties which impact on their day to day functioning, please consult with a qualified OT trained in Sensory Integration for further guidance



Difficulties registering tactile sensory information: :

- Does not seem to notice when others touch them / if somebody bumps in to them unintentionally
- They may not notice if they have sustained an injury
- Doesn't seem to notice if their hands / face is dirty
- Difficulties manipulating smaller items
- Difficulties in fine motor skills i.e. basic fastenings, cutlery skills

