



Sensory Modulation

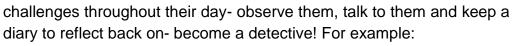
We are constantly receiving messages from our own bodies and the environment around us via our senses. Sensory modulation is the ability to sort through this information and identify what is important and what is not. This allows us to respond appropriately to incoming sensory information and remain at an appropriate level of alertness for daily activities and demands.



For example, appropriate levels of arousal will vary for different tasks like sitting to complete homework, playing with friends at a party or settling down for bedtime. We also need to be able to filter out unnecessary information and focus on what is important at that time, for example, we may be able to tune out a loud ticking clock in a room but not a fire alarm.



Children who struggle with sensory modulation and find it difficult to self-regulate can experience challenges in the development of their learning, functional skills, social skills and emotional regulation. It is important to find what helps your child self-regulate for the different





Observations	Reflection	Outcomes
After a family get together my	They spent a few hours	Play on the trampoline
child appears giddy and	bouncing and tumbling on	earlier in the day for a
active, does not settle for bed	a trampoline and the get	shorter time and provide
and will cry easily.	together was noisy and	quiet breaks away from
	busy.	busy environments.
Every Tuesday my child is	The class go swimming on	Add in another swimming
more relaxed and engaged	a Tuesday afternoon.	slot during the week and
on arrival home from school		increase amount of heavy
and will complete homework		work activities in other
without issue but has difficulty		days.
on other days of the week.		

Tips to help promote sensory modulation

- Heavy work (Proprioception) is organising and regulating, it helps the body feel good and can be helpful in reducing anxiety and promoting improved attention and focus. Add in heavy work opportunities throughout your child's day- please see our heavy work activities page for examples.
- Use sensory tools that help your child to tolerate unpleasant sensory information such as fidget tools, headphones to play music/white noise, sunglasses, chew gum or suck a sweet. Have a few of these ready to hand for when in new situations or in preparation for difficult situations.
- Providing a quiet space/den can be helpful in allowing your child to remove themselves from the sensory challenges in the environment and have time to regulate. Discuss whether a similar space can be identified in school.
- Be aware of possible triggers which may not always be apparent straight away and
 educate others involved in your child's care. For example, a fear of balloons if going
 to a birthday party, noise sensitivity and preparation needed for an upcoming fire
 drill. At times children will contain themselves when at school and then on coming
 home can experience an emotional outburst- consider a home/school
 communication book to enable you to reflect back on possible triggers and help plan
 for the future.
- Explore **breathing techniques** to help aid relaxation and try **mouth tools** (please see our mouth tools advice sheet).
- Routine, predictability, consistency establish a consistent daily routine at home
 and also around certain activities to help reduce anxieties and worries. The use of
 visual supports such as a family calendar/daily schedule, written checklists, to do list,
 diaries, symbol or picture schedules are all great tools to help organise your child
 and prepare them for upcoming activities and events. Never underestimate the
 power of visual information- it is much easier for our children to process visual
 information than verbal information.
- Be patient, stay calm and have your toolkit to hand as children with sensory modulation difficulties will often switch to fight/flight/freeze mode more often and more quickly than their peers.

