

Sensory (Messy) Play in College Park School



Sensory Processing

We use our senses to gain information about the world around us. The brain interprets all of these sensations and sends messages (electrical signals) to other parts of our body. This sensory information is important for learning about and interacting with our environment.



Why stimulate the senses?

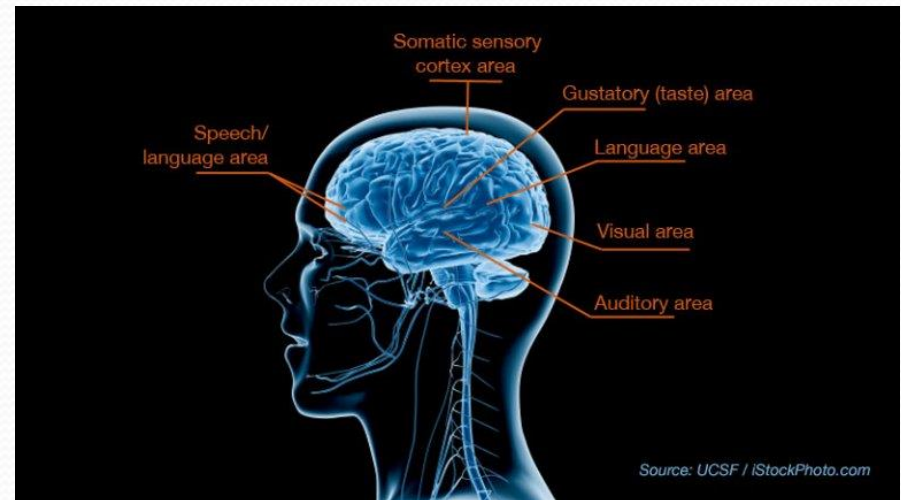
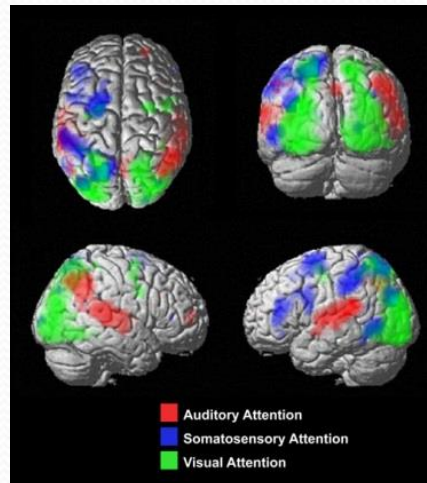
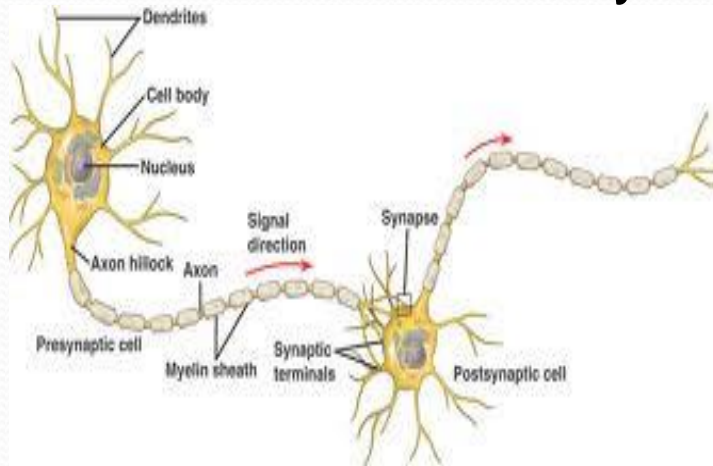
“Sensory systems interact almost instantaneously to make sense of every experience, which requires subconscious integration of information from more than one sensory system.”

-Jean Ayres

-Sensory integration

Why stimulate the senses?

- Stimulates as many areas of the brain as possible to



The formation of memory

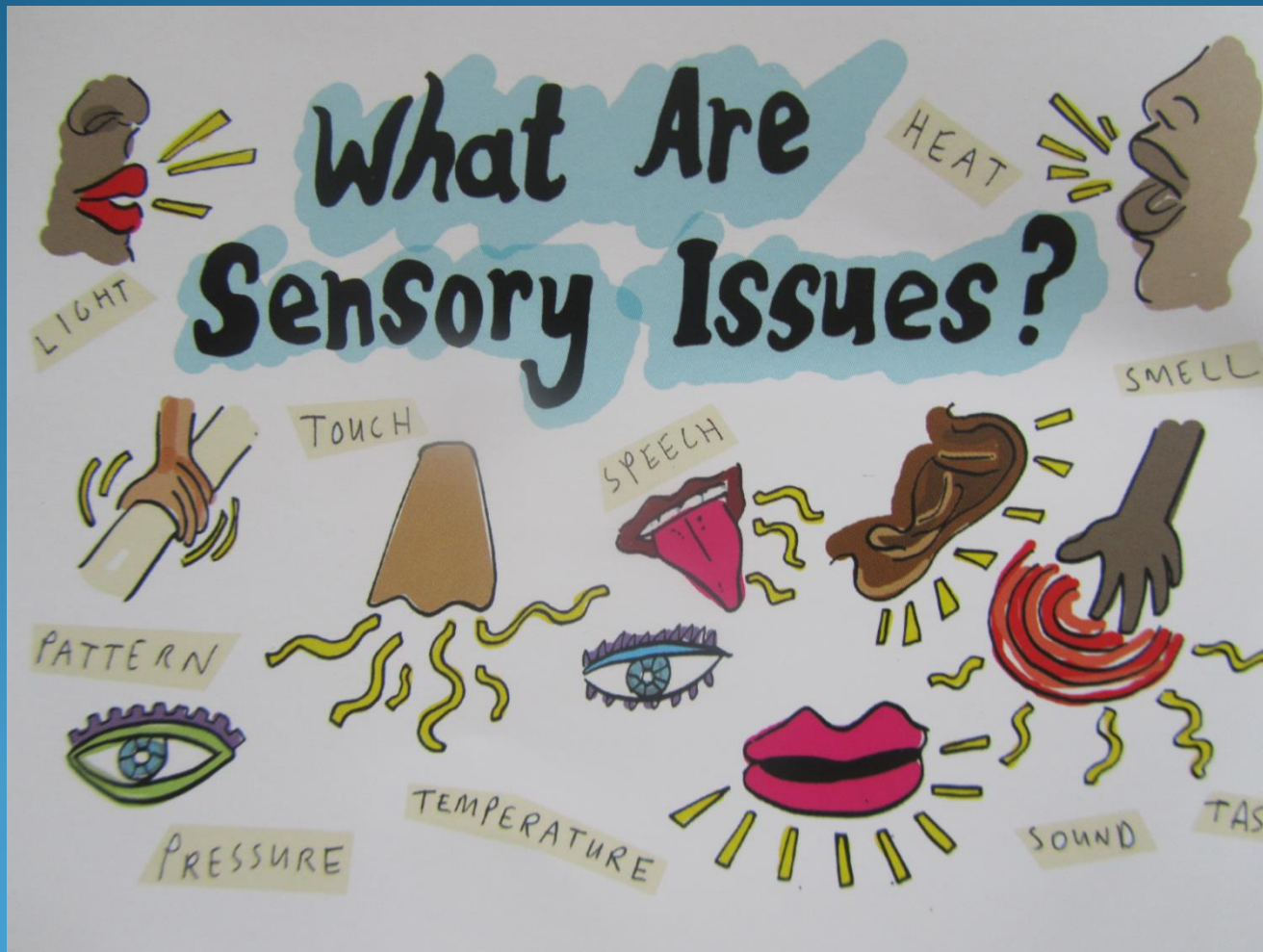
- Sensory experiences trigger episodic memories which are subjective

“When I was 15 years old, I went to Provence with my family...[I had] my first smell of fennel, lavender, and ancient pine. They were all so delicious and new to me. Those scents I will never forget.”

Raymond Blanc (chef)

- Experiential and individual
- Emotive

Sensory Issues in Autism

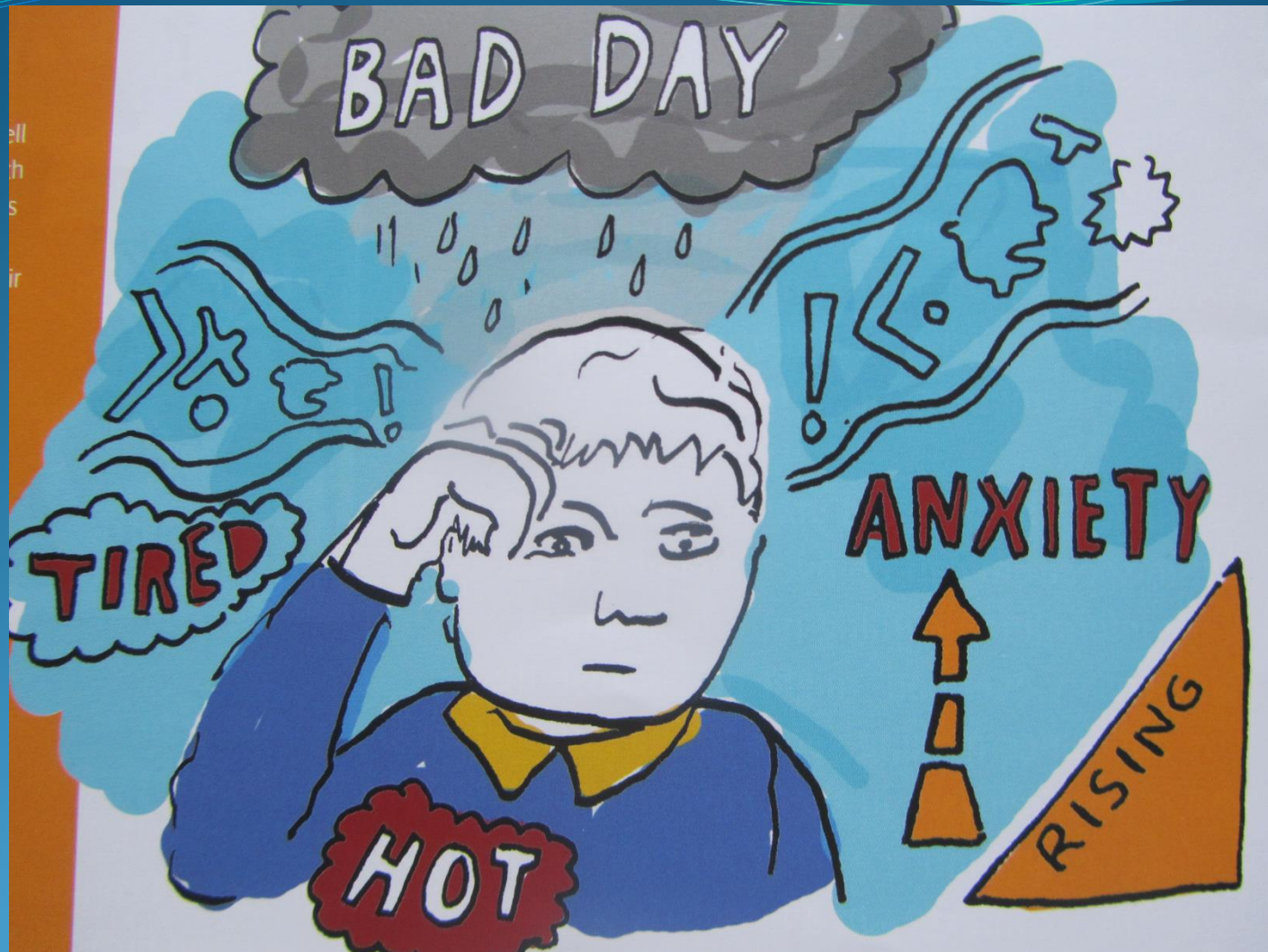


Sensory issues can vary in autistic people, ranging from one extreme (hypersensitivity) to the other (hyposensitivity). The same person can also fluctuate between these different extremes.

Sometimes children on the autistic spectrum can be overwhelmed by all the information coming into their senses-sensory overload.

Sensory integration





Autistic children's sensory experiences can be a source of great enjoyment too.

Many children with autism engage in “sensory seeking” behaviours.

These activities can give them a sense of certainty in an unpredictable world, providing extra information about their environment.



How do our pupils learn?

- Pre-formal stage of learning
- Repetition builds neurological pathways (neuroplasticity)
- Development of gross motor and fine motor skills (eg. grasping, rolling, banging, etc) through exploration and manipulation of materials which also promotes cognition (eg. understanding of cause and effect)
- Sensory processing
- Develop understanding of world around them; perception

“...the hands instinctively know how to solve something which our mind cannot do” Carl Jung



Messy play contributes enormously to the development of a child's cognitive and creative abilities. It allows a child to explore their senses by providing the opportunity to pour, mix, squeeze and squelch materials not normally available to them.



Useful websites:

www.learning4kids.net

www.messarounduk.com

www.motherandbaby.co.uk

www.handsonaswegrow.com

Autism and the Edges of the Known World by Olga Bogdashina

