



Occupational Therapy

Sensory Assessment

Program Description

The aim of Royal Far West's Sensory Assessment Program is to provide parents and teachers an understanding about why their child/student reacts as they do in certain situations, and the strategies that may help better regulate the child and improve their behaviour, attention, and general functioning across environments.

What does it mean when a child is regulated

When a child is regulated, their nervous system is in a balanced, calm and alert state. When we are 'regulated', we are calm because our body knows that it is safe in an environment and it is alert enough for the task at hand. This paves the way for our ability to function at a higher level and to do things like pay attention, use language and learn.

If the balance of calm and alert does not match the task at hand, it is very difficult for the task to be accomplished successfully. If the body is too alert, it does not feel safe and it cannot maintain the calm needed for a regulated state. If the body is too calm, it is difficult for the body to be alert enough to function effectively.

What does it look like when a child is not regulated

When we are dysregulated, the logical, thinking part of the brain switches off. Examples of functional changes when children are dysregulated include, but are not limited to:

- Emotional responses that are disproportionate to the cause of the emotion. (Large meltdowns for seemingly small problems; overly excited in the playground/free play)
- Difficult for the child to calm after an emotional response
- Difficulty paying attention in class: either a strong need to move constantly or appearing to 'zone out'
- Difficulty lining up
- Difficulty in noisy and visually busy situations eg. playground/hall for assembly
- Difficulty transitioning between activities
- Constant fidgeting/pulling at clothes
- Appearing anxious
- Often having difficulty interacting appropriately with peers: strong need to control play; not having any ideas; unable to initiate interaction appropriately
- Changes in level of activity, behaviour in response to movement, sound, emotions (positive and negative)
- Difficulty following multi-step instructions
- Learning difficulties
- Slow to respond to verbal input
- Easily distracted by visual or auditory input

Program Structure

Royal Far West will provide:

- 1 x 60 min classroom observation with all children for the program together
- 1 x 60 min parent interview
- 1 x 30 min classroom teacher interview
- 1 x 60 min parent and classroom teacher feedback session
- 1 x sensory report for the parent and teacher

Referral Criteria

- Primary school aged children (Kindergarten to Year 6)
- Children who cannot achieve or maintain a regulated (calm or alert) state

How Sensory Assessment works

- Teachers identify children within their class that they believe would be suitable
- Teachers and Parents are sent a questionnaire to be completed prior to the child's first session.
- The child is observed by our Occupational Therapist in their classroom environment via video link
- Parents and teachers are interviewed individually and a joint feedback session is conducted

How the school is involved

It is expected that as part of this program the school will:

- Provide the Royal Far West team with one point of contact within the school for scheduling and to take responsibility of collecting the child's information.
- Notify the Royal Far West TeleCare team as soon as you become aware that cancellations of sessions need to occur e.g. the children cannot attend.
- As part of the program, classroom teachers are expected to attend interviews and feedback sessions
- Notify the team as issues arise and of any feedback you receive so we can continually improve our service.
- Upon completion of the program, the therapy aide and school support staff will be asked to fill in evaluation surveys.

How Parents/Carers are involved

Evidence is very clear that developmental therapy is enhanced when a child's primary care-givers are involved, and support the care plan. We understand the difficulties parents and carers face in balancing their daily activities with the needs of their children. Our goal is to support and encourage parents and carers.

As part of the program, parents are expected to attend interviews and feedback sessions. A final sensory report is also provided to parents and teachers.

Contact us to discuss your children's needs and to get an obligation-free quote!

Group discounts available

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