



# Inclusion News



Welcome to issue 7 of Inclusion News!



## I sense something coming.....

Spring 2 2022



Welcome to this half term's Inclusion Newsletter which will focus on sensory difficulties. We will be looking at different types of Sensory difficulties as well as some hints and tips to support with this at home.

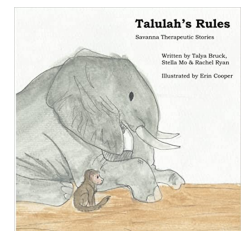
Sensory difficulties can be overwhelming to manage, but there is a lot of support out there to help with this and lots of steps you can take to help alleviate any concerns you may have, while also supporting your child. Sensory difficulties are very common and we have many children at Moorlands with a variety of sensory needs.

## Story Corner



### Talulah's Rules

Talulah the baboon visits the watering hole on the hot Savanna to drink and mingle with the other animals. What the other animals do not realise is that Talulah finds the noises, sights, smells and the hot Savanna sun too overwhelming. This is a story to help autistic children and young people, their families and friends to understand the ways autistic people may think and the difficulties and challenges they may experience.



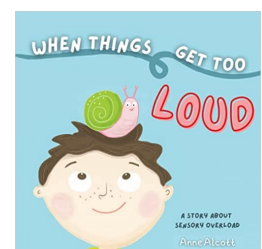
### Get your dragon to eat healthy food



Having a pet dragon is very fun! He can sit, roll over, and play... He can light candles on a birthday cake, light a campfire and so many other cool things...But what if he dragon only eats junk and processed foods? A story that explores food and the importance of eating healthily. Another story in the train your dragon series.

### When things get too loud: a story about sensory overload

When the world gets too much Bo feels his Feel-O-Meter go from 1-10. Noises, smells, sounds, the world can be an overwhelming place. One day, Bo's numbers climb too quickly and all he wants to do is hide. But then he makes a remarkable little friend... 'When things get too loud' is a story about sensory overload, how it feels, what can trigger it and what may help. The Feel-O-Meter provides the child and parents with a visual guide through emotions and the books comes with ideas to cope with overwhelming situations.





Children with diagnosed sensory difficulties tend to fall into one of two categories—**Hypersensitivity** or **Hyposensitivity**.

**Hypersensitivity** is used to describe children who are overly sensitive to certain stimuli, show aversion or 'over react' to these.

**Hyposensitivity** is used to describe children who 'under reactive' to certain stimuli such as sound, pain or texture; which would normally trigger a response.

You may recognise some sensory difficulties with your child, however this does not necessarily mean they have a complex sensory processing disorder, but rather they have traits. Many children demonstrate sensory difficulties, and at various stages of their development which is quite normal. Persistent and escalating issues may warrant further investigation. Sensory difficulties are much more common in children with Autism.

Some of the most common sensory difficulties involve **TASTE**, **TOUCH** and **HEARING**. Here is some information about each, along with some of the presenting behaviours and top tips.

## TASTE



### How this presents:

- Fixed food choices e.g. processed or 'beige' food
- Food refusal or retching
- Difficulties exploring different textures within food e.g. eating lumps in mashed potato
- Avoiding 'wet' food, sauces and gravies
- Difficulties distinguishing flavours
- Compulsive eating of inedible objects (also known as PICA)
- Avoidance of eating warm, hot or cold foods
- Excessive drooling or dribbling
- Chewing objects or clothes



### How can you help?

- Present food in a novel or creative way, e.g. food faces or special plates or 'trains'
- Cutting food into manageable chunks
- Modelling how enjoyable a varied diet can be
- Lots of praise for trying something new, even if they taste but don't eat it
- Food play without the expectation to eat it— angel delight, jelly, cooked pasta, mashed potato or baked beans
- Chewable jewellery / items for those who chew clothing or objects excessively
- Organising food into lots of smaller containers, rather than on the same plate, if they are worried about contamination
- Introduce one 'new' food a week and model eating this
- Cook together and plan meals as a family
- Grow your own herbs, salads and vegetables— this can be very encouraging!



# TOUCH

## How this presents:

- Refusal to wear certain clothing
- Difficulty with self care– e.g. tooth brushing, hair brushing or showers
- Sensitivity to materials, seams, labels or certain textures
- Stripping off!
- Removal of shoes and socks
- Over or under sensitive to heat, cold or pain
- Refusal to touch sticky, messy or slimy things
- Excessive handwashing after touching things
- Over sensitive to messy play, actively making things messy, slimy or sticky in order to feel the sensation
- Repetitive behaviours and the need to constantly 'fiddle' with something
- Picking, scratching and stroking of skin
- Aversion to being touched or needing to feel touched, wrapped or 'grounded'



## How can you help?

- Warning them about touch, if they are averse e.g. I am just going to.....
- Use firm pressure when touching, avoiding light touch as this can cause tickling; which many people dislike!
- Cut out labels from clothes
- Select fabrics and materials together when shopping
- Heavy tasks or 'weighted' items, to help with sensory feedback and feeling grounded
- Sucking sweets, lollies or yoghurts
- Eating chewy or crunchy foods
- Body brushing
- Messy play, initially using items rather than hands e.g. spoons or sticks
  - Plan time for shoes and socks to be off and explore different textures under foot e.g. grass, concrete, carpet, water or sand

# SOUND



## How this presents:

- Being overtly loud or very quiet
- Not liking noise made by others, despite enjoyment from making noise themselves
- Intolerance to rhythmic or repetitive sounds, such as alarms, ticking clocks, passing traffic or scraping chairs
- Difficulty in filtering out background noise
- Inability to distinguish between lots of sounds
- Inability to remember what has been said to them, due to being preoccupied with background noises
- 'Tuning' out sounds (also known as selective hearing!)
- Avoidance of crowded or noisy places
- Banging objects loudly
- Covering ears



## How can you help?

- Ear defenders, which can block out excessive noise
- Listening to music with headphones or ear buds
- Pre-warning (where possible) if it is going to be noisy
- Positioning away from things that make a noise
- Providing opportunities to make lots of noise– shouting, screaming or banging things loudly in a safe space
- Silent disco!
- Gradual introduction to busy places in advance if you are planning a big event or visiting something where there may be a lot of noise
- Chewy or crunchy foods, to distract from background noise
- Play listening games