



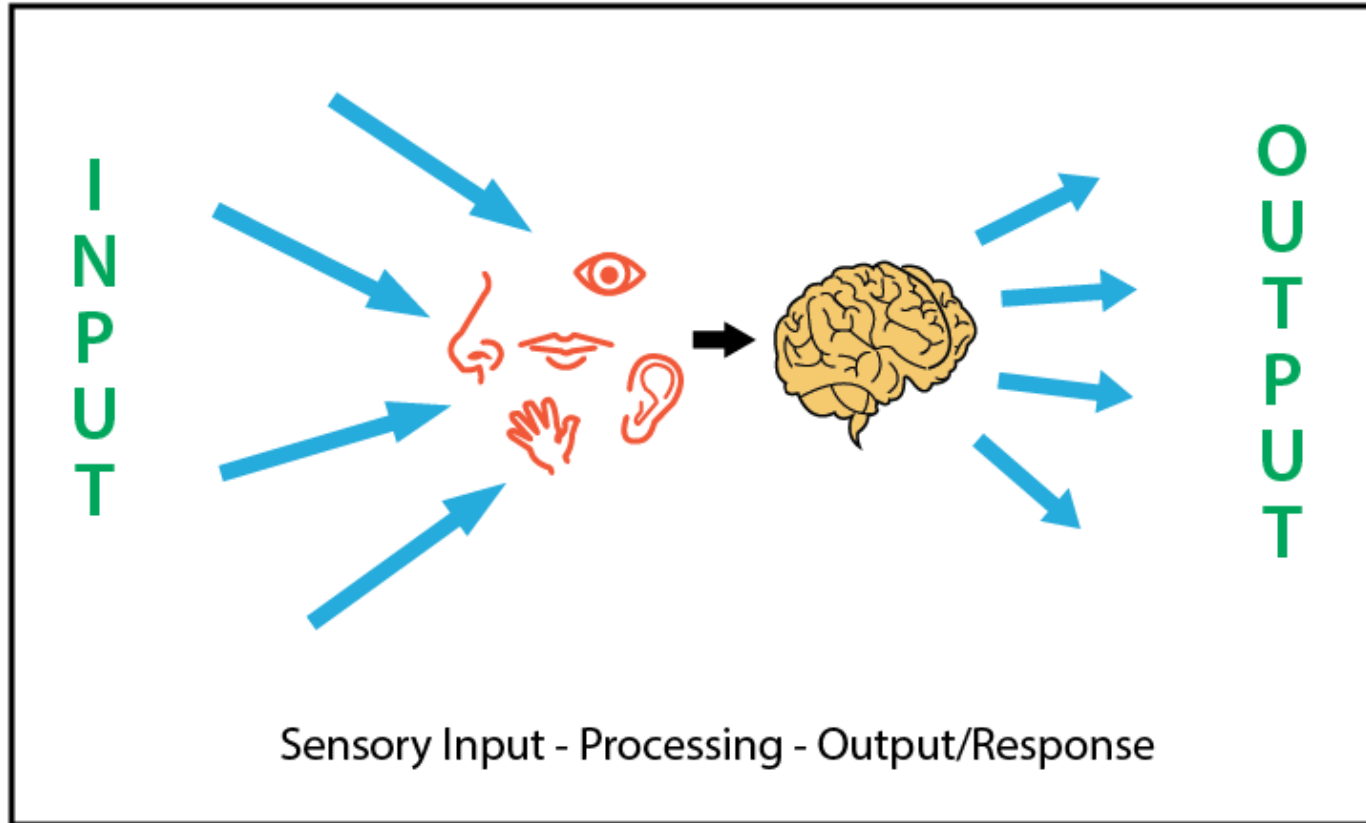
# Understanding a Child's Sensory Need and Sensory Strategies used

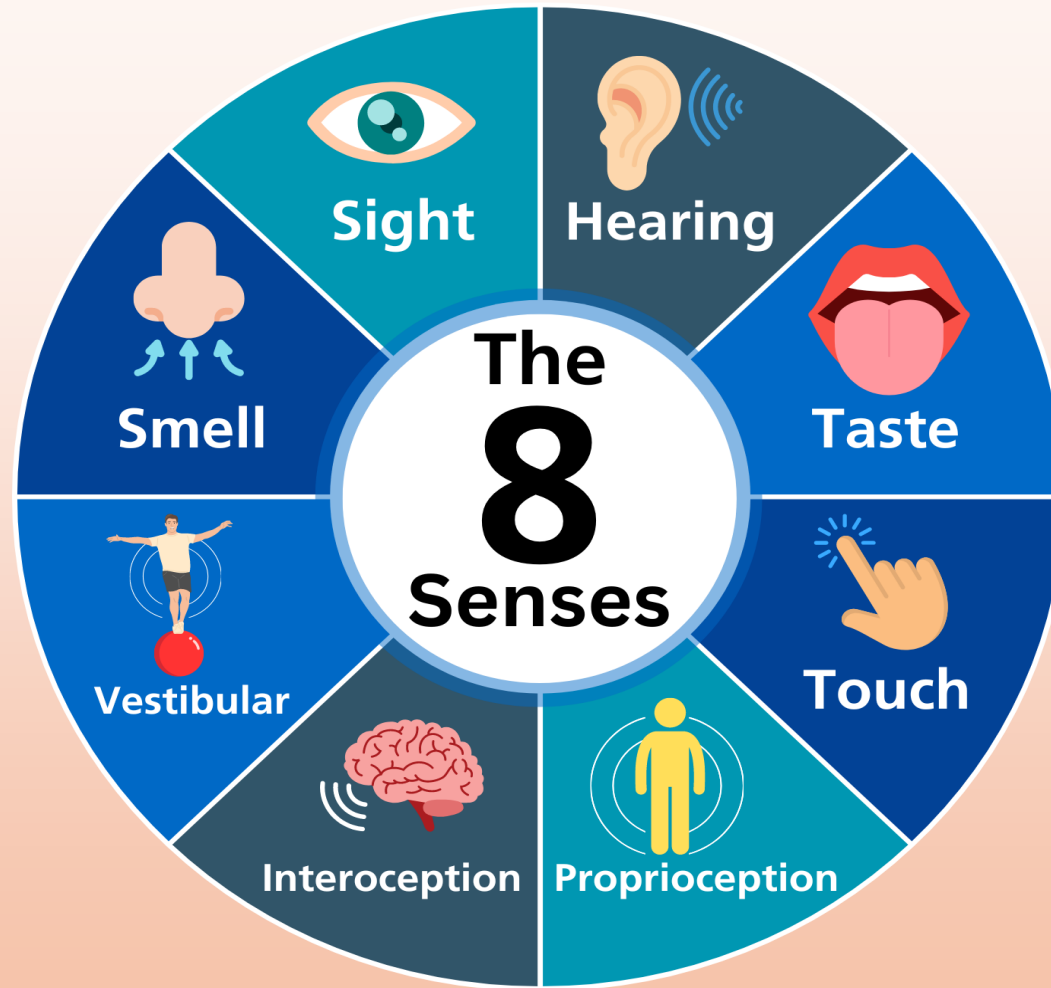


## Aims of the session:

- Discuss the 8 senses
- Processing sensory information
- Universal sensory strategies
- Sensory circuits
- Calming, deep pressure

# What is sensory processing?







# We all process sensory information differently

- Anybody struggling to listen to me as they can hear other noises?
- Anybody only use one shampoo?
- Turn the radio off when you reverse?
- Do you prefer baths or showers?
- Rock back and forth in office chair
- Prefer a heavy blanket even in summer

1. Sound

2. Touch or smell

3. Sound

4. Touch

5. Sense of balance

6. Body awareness



Sensory  
Over-  
Responsive



Sensory  
Under-  
Responsive



Sensory  
Seeking /  
Craving





## Sensory strategies

- Sensory tools
- Sensory program
- **Sensory circuit**
- Movement breaks
- Environmental and classroom adaptations

# What is a sensory program?

- A sensory program is a carefully designed, personalised activity plan that provides sensory input that a child may need to stay focused and organised throughout the day.
- Each child has a unique set of sensory needs.
- Generally, a child that's nervous system is over aroused will need more calming input, while a child who is under aroused will need more alerting input.
- You may be doing these activities already without realising.
- It may not work at first – don't give up!





## A sensory circuit runs in three sections.

- **Alerting section** – The aim of this section is to provide vestibular stimulation within a controlled setting, preparing the brain for learning and for the demands of the school environment.
- **Organising section** – This section includes activities that require multi-sensory processing and balance. The individual needs to organise their body, plan their approach and do more than one thing at a time in sequential order.
- **Calming section** – This section helps the child to calm down into a “just right” state ready to focus and attend. You must always finish with a calming activity.

Alerting	Organising	Calming
 <p>Star Jumps</p>	 <p>Lunges</p> <p>Lunge forward- both sides</p>	 <p>Hold the tree pose-breath</p> <p>Option 1      2      3</p>
 <p>Touch your toes and reach for the sky</p>	 <p>Opposite knee to elbow</p>	 <p>Downward dog- Hold and breath</p>
 <p>Touch toe to toe</p>	 <p>Balance on one leg</p>	 <p>Childs pose Stretch arms forward Hold and breath</p>
 <p>Kick your legs behind you</p>	 <p>Circle arms forward and back Try opposite directions at same time</p>	 <p>Push-Up exercise</p> <p>Choose Press up or against the wall</p>
 <p>High Knees</p>	 <p>'Spotty dog' Opposite arm to leg forward- SWITCH</p>	 <p>Wall sit- Hold</p>
 <p>Hop foot to foot</p>	 <p>Crab Walk</p> <p>1      2</p> <p>Walk like a crab</p>	 <p>Plank- HOLD</p>

Know walk back to the classroom slow and calm: CHOOSE to do



or

Hands on head press down



or

Press palms of hand together



or

Bear walk



Wrap arms around self and hug tight



# Calming equipment free regulation strategies

- Deep pressure
- Bear walks, animal walks
- Breathing
- Sucking/ blowing
- Crunchy snacks
- Pushing/ lifting/ pulling (heavy work)
- Weighted rucksack
- Wall sit
- Squashing
- Joint compressions





# What is deep pressure input?

- A therapeutic concept used especially in OT to help children regulate their arousal and sensory systems. The goal is to help the child feel more grounded, calm, and regulated.
- Deep pressure refers to **firm, sustained pressure** on the body, such as from a hug, squeeze, weighted blanket, or compression garment.
- It is used to stimulate the **proprioceptive system**.
- It supports **self-regulation**: for children who struggle with sensory overload or dysregulation, deep pressure gives them predictable, controllable input to help them settle.

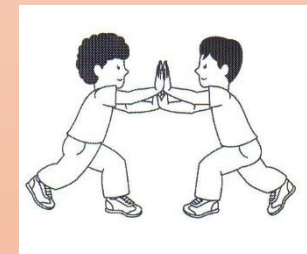
# How Deep Pressure Can Be Applied (Safe Strategies)

## Passive methods:

- Firm squeezes/hugs
- Weighted blanket/lap pad
- Shoulder squeezes/Joint compressions
- Massage
- Lying under cushions/bean bags

## Active methods:

- 'Heavy work' – pushing/pulling/lifting
- Carrying a weighted backpack
- Therapy ball activities
- Resistant bands
- Obstacle courses
- Wall/chair pushes



# Sensory tools

- Fidget aids
- Chewellery or chewy
- Sensory bag
- Calm tent
- Move and sit cushion
- Lap pad
- Theraband
- Wobble stool
- Ear defenders
- Gym ball



# Useful websites

- [RCOT launches official weighted blankets guide | RCOT](#)
- [Joining in with Sensory Differences | NHS GGC](#)