



Sensory Solutions: Empowering Parents to Support Their Child’s Occupational Engagement and Well-being Through Free Educational Workshops and Resources

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BACKGROUND

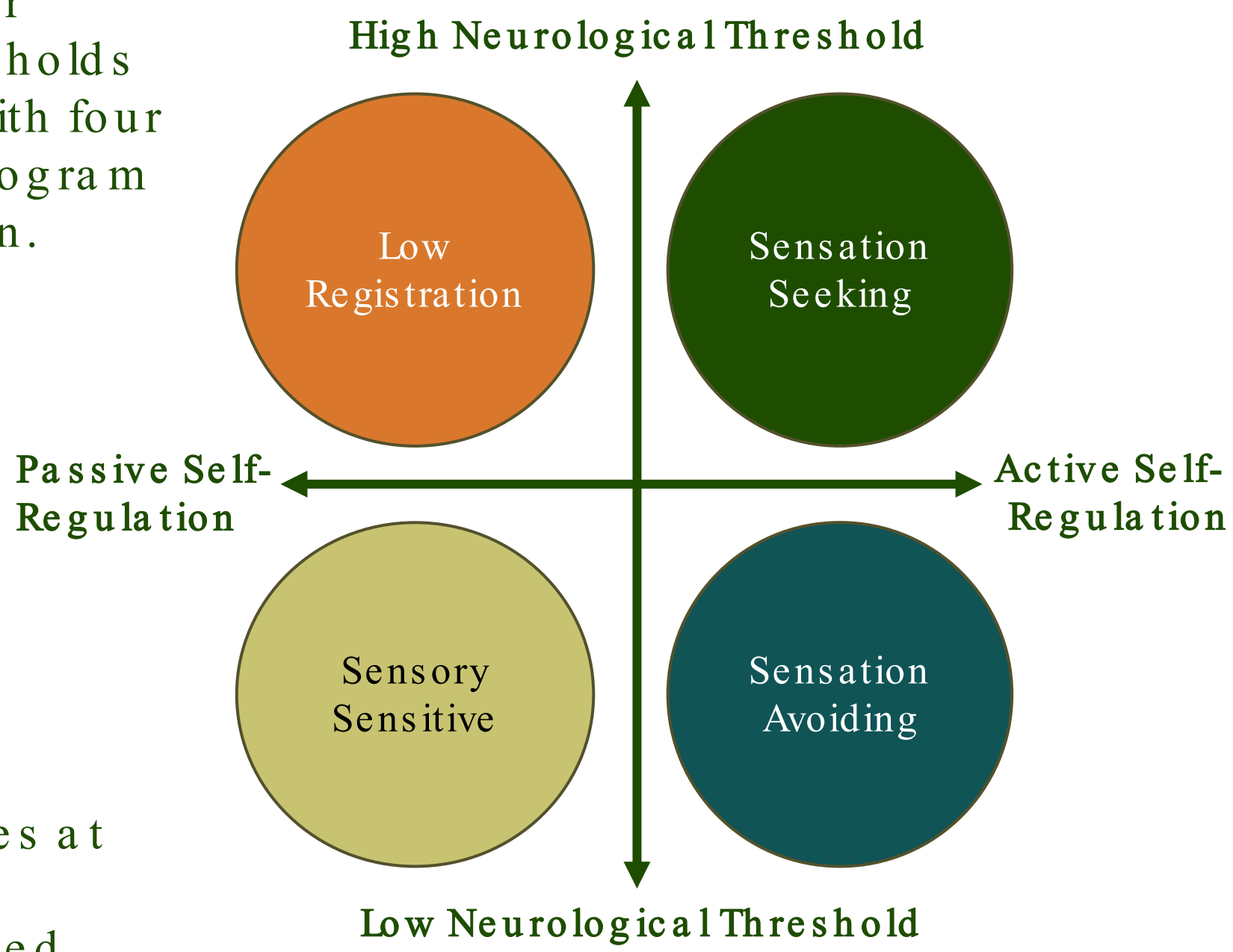
Children with sensory processing difficulties (SPD) experience challenges detecting, organizing, and responding to sensory information, which can interfere with participation in daily occupations such as play, ADLs, sleep, and school.⁴ Both over- and under-responsiveness across sensory systems can lead to sensory seeking or avoidance behaviors that can hinder the development of motor, cognitive, and social skills, further impacting occupational engagement.⁵

Caregivers play a critical role in supporting their child’s sensory regulation; however, many report barriers including limited understanding of sensory processing, minimal access to practical resources, time constraints, and increased emotional strain.^{2,3} In outpatient settings such as NoCo Pediatric Occupational Therapy (NoCo Peds), additional barriers, including limited therapist time and a lack of structured educational materials, can further restrict caregiver education. Clinic leadership identified a need for accessible and engaging sensory education strategies, including virtual content, video resources, and free workshops to improve caregiver confidence, follow-through, and support for children’s sensory needs outside of therapy sessions.

THEORETICAL BASIS

Dunn’s Model of Sensory Processing:¹

- Provided a structured lens for understanding sensory thresholds and behavioral responses with four sensory patterns to guide program design and resource creation.
- Supported development of “Parent Sensory Questionnaire,” helping caregivers understand their own sensory processing patterns and providing insight into how these patterns influence responses to their children.
- Aligned with existing practices at NoCo Peds, where the Child Sensory Profile is routinely used.



COM-B Model¹⁶



GOALS, OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES

Goal 1: To develop and implement a comprehensive sensory education program for caregivers of children with SPD.

Objectives	Activities
1. The OTS will collaborate with OTs and parents of children with SPD to gather information about successes and challenges they experience to identify specific sensory education and resource topics by week 4.	Shadowed 40 OT sessions; Interviewed 7 OTs and 1 parent of 2 children with SPD
2. The OTS will create a sensory processing parent education resource bank with modules, activities, and strategies to support their child’s performance and participation by week 8.	Created interactive education modules, handouts, and customizable sensory diet template
3. The OTS will lead two parent education workshops, one at the Greeley location and one at the Windsor location, using modules from the sensory processing parent education resource bank by week 10.	Developed Canva slideshow and sensory tool catalog. Ran 2 in-person workshops.
4. The OTS will provide an online recorded version of the parent education workshop for NoCo Peds to publish along with links to the supplemental materials and short video resources by week 13.	Recorded 1 virtual workshop with shareable link. Created scripts for 5 educational Instagram reels.
5. The OTS will provide treatment to children with SPD and individualized education to their caregivers, using the strategies learned and resources developed through the capstone project and experience by week 14.	Planned and conducted 12 treatment sessions. Collaboratively developed 1 customized sensory diet.

EVALUATION METHODS & FINDINGS

Developed structured evaluation plan including progress monitoring, feedback integration, data collection, and outcome review.

- Weekly check-in meetings with site mentor assessed progress, addressed challenges, refined strategies, and revised/added objectives.
- Maintained Google Sheets document to record interview and observation notes, module and handout development, obstacles, workshop reflections, and treatment session planning.
- Ensured clinical accuracy and relevance through weekly review of materials by site mentor and NoCo Peds OTs.
- Collected workshop feasibility and acceptability data by tracking attendance, engagement, and participation at each location.
- Gathered parent feedback through workshop feedback forms to evaluate most beneficial content, confidence levels, and needed improvements.
- Conducted final evaluation meeting with site mentor confirming all objective and overall goal were fully met and all deliverables were ready for sustainable use.

Workshop Attendance & Engagement	Greeley: 2/8 parents attended Windsor: 5.5/11 parents attended (0.5 = parent who arrived late and left early) <i>**Lack of childcare provided was found to be a barrier to attendance**</i>	
	Parent Feedback	Most helpful workshop modules: “What is Sensory Processing” “Flipped Lid/Hand Model of the Brain” “Sensory Patterns” “Sensory vs. Behavioral” “Learning Their Own Sensory Preferences/Sensitivities” “Support Strategies/What to Expect” Parent confidence in applying sensory support strategies: All attendees rated confidence as 3 (<u>moderately confident</u>) or 4 (<u>very confident</u>) on a 5-point Likert scale <i>**Parent and site mentor feedback was incorporated to revise slideshow and workshop script before recording virtual workshop**</i>
Overall Outcome	The project goal and all objectives were achieved, and sustainability measures (deliverables, implementation instructions) were provided to NoCo Peds.	

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Sustainable Deliverables:

- **Physical binders** for both clinic locations including: **15 educational modules** and **17 bilingual** (English/Spanish) **parent handouts** organized by sensory pattern and occupation.
- **Customizable sensory diet templates** (one per clinic) with laminated activity cards, schedules, and user guide.
- **Recorded parent workshop, slideshow, and virtual resource folder** shared with all therapists at NoCo Peds for ongoing implementation.

Immediate Impacts:

- Caregivers gained immediate access to digestible, evidence-based educational materials in both virtual and physical formats.
- Workshops promoted caregiver understanding of sensory processing, awareness of their own sensory profiles, and increased confidence in using strategies to support their children.
- OTs benefited from improved educational efficiency and consistency with ready-to-use, structured resources, addressing time-related education barriers.²

Long-Term Anticipated Impacts:

- Improved self-regulation and participation in daily occupations (dressing, play, sleep, school) for children with SPD.
- Reduced caregiver stress and increased positive caregiver-child interactions.³
- Strengthened session carryover and strategy follow-through across environments.
- Enhanced family-centered practice and therapeutic outcomes at NoCo Peds beyond the capstone experience.

KEY REFERENCES

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