

# Helping Kids



Health Care & the Skills of Living for Children

## Personal Message

### Why is my child doing that?

Children are so different that it is often difficult to tell what is typical and not typical. At Kids in Motion Pediatric Therapy Services, we often get such calls from parents, inquiring what exactly is “normal”. Common questions often are in regards to children’s behavior. Many behaviors are typical, but there are some that we start to probe a bit further. In the following articles, you will receive information regarding a disorder that is affecting many children and is on the rise—sensory integration dysfunction or S.I. dysfunction.

S.I. dysfunction typically presents as children who have difficulty with attention, fidget a lot, aggressive or fearful, problems following directions, just to name a few! Some children are also very picky eaters or can’t stand certain textures or sounds. Sensory integration dysfunction can cross many functional areas: language, gross motor or fine motor skills. A child may be able to perform well with gross motor skills but falls apart with language or fine motor skills.

Some of our therapists are trained in using sensory integration treatment during their therapy sessions. Sensory integration therapy involves using

movement to improve the integration of the senses for improved output. It is a child friendly treatment approach that involves activities that children love to engage in. Evaluation involves standardized testing as well as parent report and much observation. Treatment length and frequency is dependent on the severity of the need, but is individualized with the child and family’s schedules. In addition, families are given many home program ideas so they can address the child’s behavior and speed progress. Often, after the initial visit, a family goes home with many techniques to use that will impact the child immediately. Other aspects of the child’s life are also monitored to make sure they are successful in every situation. We hear from many families that a child will do well at gymnastics class but falls apart in school.

Whatever the concern, our therapists at Kids in Motion Pediatric Therapy Services can help a family to provide an opportunity for success for their child no matter what.



Mary Hydorn, PT  
—owner, Kids in Motion

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## What is Sensory Integration



**Sensory integration develops in everyone from infancy to adulthood. It is how we learn to stay awake when we need to be listening...**

As a parent, teacher, or caregiver, you want the best for your children. You want to ensure they have everything they need for a successful start and healthy development. It is important not only to look at a child's physical development, but also his/her sensory development.

Have you ever wondered why your child reacts differently towards daily tasks that don't seem to bother others? Questions parents often ask include:

- Why can't my child sit still?
- Why do the tags in my child's clothes bother him/her?
- Why is my child always getting in trouble at school?
- Why does my child have difficulty with changes in routine?
- Why is my child such a picky eater?

If these questions sound relevant to you, then your child may have difficulty with sensory integration. Like other aspects of development, sensory integration begins in the womb and continues through adulthood. Sensory integration is what puts all the pieces together, allowing us to

be efficient, creative, and independent in our day to day life.

Children with difficulty with sensory integration may present with a variety of different symptoms. When these symptoms interfere with the child's day to day activities the child may have S.I. dysfunction. In the following paragraph you will learn more about S.I. dysfunction. If you have any questions regarding your child's sensory development, you should contact your pediatrician for guidance. He or she will be able to answer your questions or refer you to a pediatric occupational therapist. The earlier a delay is identified the more quickly and easily it can be handled.

### WHAT IS SENSORY INTEGRATION?

Simply speaking, sensory integration is the ability to take in, sort out, and connect information from the world around us. The information we take in comes through our senses. In development, sensory integration function takes place at an automatic level. In other words, you don't have to think about it. Without effective

sensory integration we are unable to interact comfortably with the world around us.

## WHAT IS SENSORY INTEGRATION DYSFUNCTION?

Sensory integration dysfunction occurs when the child cannot analyze, organize, and respond to sensory messages accurately. Difficulty with S.I. dysfunction can affect development, speech, behavior and the ability to process information. Some common characteristics of sensory integration dysfunction include:

- Difficulty maintaining attention to task
- Clumsiness, frequent falling
- Difficulty with transitions between activities
- High or low activity levels
- Social/emotional issues
- Delays in motor skills
- Delays in communication
- Impulsivity
- High distractibility
- High or low pain tolerance
- Unusual eating habits (i.e. picky eater)
- Aggression towards self or others
- Difficulty with multiple step directions

## HOW IS SENSORY INTEGRATION DYSFUNCTION TREATED?

A pediatric occupational therapist will assess both the child's and family's needs by conducting a family interview, and observing the child's responses to input from the environment.

# Tips and Tricks

**1.** Providing children fidget toys during sit down activities can help children maintain attention to task. Some examples of fidget toys are stress balls, Chewy Tubes, vibrating toys, or a Tangle Toy. It can be helpful to make a fidget box that can be easily transported to the car, in a restaurant, or anywhere else a child is asked to sit still.



**2.** Providing children with movement opportunities allows him/her to attain an appropriate level of alertness. If your child enjoys movement allowing him/her to swing or do jumping jacks before homework activities can increase participation.



**3.** When children become over stimulated it is important to provide them with calming sensory input.

Some examples include designating an area the child can use as a hideout, such as a quiet corner; listening to rhythmical music; and using low level lighting.



**4.** Providing activities that include heavy jobs can develop stabilization necessary for coordination, as well as promoting attention, focus, and calmness. Examples of heavy jobs include carrying books or laundry, pushing or pulling activities, or doing animal walks.



**5.** Up and down movements such as jumping rope, bouncing on a ball or trampoline, may help your child increase alertness. Back and forth movements such as swinging or rocking chairs can be used for calming.



Sensory integration therapy is child-directed and focuses on sensory areas specific to each child's needs. Each child is encouraged to participate in a variety of sensory activities to facilitate the development of underlying skills necessary for successful completion of tasks.

Treatment sessions encourage parent/child interaction with a positive sensory experience (touch, movement, visual). Additionally a sensory program specific to the child's sensory needs will be developed for home and school.

# FAQ

## - Frequently Asked Questions About Pediatric Therapy

1. Why doesn't my child ever follow my directions or do what I say?

Being able to follow directions is called motor planning. Many children have difficulty following multi-step motor plans because they can't break tasks down into simple steps. They may look like they are being "bad", but simply are unable to break the task down.

2. Why does my child hate certain pieces of clothing?

a. Often children are tactilely defensive. This means that they can't tolerate certain textures, temperatures or they way certain things feel. Their feeling may be so extreme that they refuse to wear certain pieces of clothing or refuse to engage in "typical" child behavior—like play in the sand or in the water.

3. Why does my child play so rough with other children?

a. Children who play extremely aggressive often are seeking sensory input. Crashing, jumping and bumping into others feels good to them, and no matter how often you tell them to stop, its difficult for them to stop because it feels good!! These children often have difficulty grading their movements— all or nothing.

4. Why does my child avoid being in groups or seems to have a lot of fears?

a. Some children have difficulty with tasks in groups because they don't like to be touched by others-tactile defensiveness. Some need tasks to move in a slow methodical rate so they can react and plan better, but in a group, the other children do not want to wait for that child who wants to "slow down" .

## CALL YOUR PEDIATRIC THERAPIST:

Take this simple test...Does your child exhibit these characteristics?

YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child have difficulty with transitions between places, activities, or people?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is your child sensitive to touch, sound, light, or smells?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child have difficulty maintaining attention to task?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child have unusually low or high activity levels?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child display delays in communication or an inappropriate response to social situations?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child have difficulty recovering or calming self when upset?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is your child a picky eater or does he/she show a strong preferences towards certain foods?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child appear clumsy or uncoordinated with daily tasks?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child have difficulty following multiple step directions?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your child avoid or seek movement opportunities that interfere with daily tasks?

### Results

If you answered YES to any of these questions, please come in for a free screening.



## Featured Therapist

### Brian Arrol, OTR/L

**B**rian Arrol is a pediatric occupational therapist who graduated from Eastern Michigan University in 1992. He has 12 years of experience with pediatric clients in various settings such as: outpatient, outpatient head injury, home care, schools, and the Michigan School for the Deaf and Blind. He has worked with Kids in Motion Pediatric Therapy Services since 1999 starting with the schools and home care and now working full time in the outpatient clinic as the occupational therapy supervisor.

Brian has specialized in visual/perceptual therapy, oral motor control, motor learning/ kinesthetic approach, therapeutic listening, myofascial release, hand skills, and a variety of other techniques. He also is certified in cranial sacral therapy and the sensory integration praxis test (SIPT).

Brian believes in a creative/innovative approach to treat the individual child. He also uses his specialized training and functional approach to help each child reach their maximum potential. Brian is a gentle, energetic person and the children connect well with his personality.



## SUCCESSES **What parents are saying...**



Our son Zachary has been receiving OT therapy at Kids in Motion for some time. He had been seen for OT for just over a year at another center. He improved somewhat,

but his progress since seeing Brian has been much more remarkable. Zach suffers from prematurity issues that include, low tone, sensory dysfunction, ADHD, audio and visual processing, memory, etc. With so many things going on it has been hard to find the right answers. Brian assesses his needs at every session. Brian is in tune with the children and sees more than we do. He uses all of his learning and experience and takes them a step further. He works from all angles and is eager for our feedback. Of all

the things we have implemented for our son, we both agree that Brian has done the most good. Thank you Brian! —C.U.

Alexander came to Kids In Motion as a boy not quite comfortable in his own skin. He was not very confident in his abilities, be it physical, or verbal and interacting with others. His sensory issues caused him distress in that he was unable to focus on the task at hand.

Brian Arrol single-handedly transformed my son into a confident,



out going, social, more physically fit, happy, more coordinated individual. In addition, he has taught me, as his mother, to help him. Alexander began kindergarten one month ago. He has had four children approach him for play dates. He is making friends a lot easier due to the fact that he is comfortable in his own skin. He is now a confident young man who is now able to joke around and finally just be a kid that is worry free! His mind is no longer bogged up with his sensory issues. —D. L.

# Need Help For Your Child?



**Come and visit us for a FREE CONSULTATION**

**Find out how Pediatric Therapy can help you restore health and gain the Skills of Living for your child.**

**Call us today at 248-684-9610 for your no-charge consultation**



Pediatric Therapy Services

Kids in Motion Pediatric Therapy Services specializes in physical, occupational, and speech and language therapy for the pediatric client 0 – 18 years old. We have been in business since 1993. We provide services in our clinic in Highland, in your home, and we contract therapist to schools and hospitals for temporary and permanent positions with our 50 plus staff. We have many therapists with many different specialties. We focus on a functional approach for children of all abilities. We believe in a strong home program, it is these daily functional exercises that help the child progress faster. We offer aquatic therapy at our Highland location or at your own pool. “We make therapy fun”.



**WE CARE ABOUT YOU AND YOUR CHILD!**

**Call us today for a free consultation at**

**248-684-9610**

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