

# Using a Sensory Diet In The Classroom And At Home

Fun-ctional Therapy, Inc.

Judy McCarter, OTR/L

9-16-08

# Sensory Diet

- increase or decrease input
- nervous system balance or regulation
- increase focusing and availability for learning
- used when sensory problems impact function
- changes as sensory input changes throughout the day

# Regulated State

- appropriate response to changing sensory information

# Sources of Sensory Input

- visual
- auditory
- olfactory
- tactile
- gustatory
- proprioceptive
- vestibular

# Exploration Stage

- children trying different sensory strategies
- obtain nervous system balance
- provide various types of sensory input for children to try

# Detective Stage

- Observation by parents, teachers, therapists
- Noting where and when exploration occurring
- How long activity is occurring
- When using object or movement how does child look
- How does child appear when activity completed
- Activity Analysis

# Self Regulator Supporter Stage

- supporters are parents, teachers and therapists
- schedule, plan, provide motivators and external supports (dog)
- maintain regulated state through supports that have been set up

# Social Emotional Guide Stage

- individuals who connect with the child
- help child to balance nervous system through voice, gestures, animation, cues
- child increases focus through Guide facilitation

# Why do we want to use a sensory diet?

- help maintain a regulated state
- assist nervous system when responding to changing or unpredictable input
- normalize interpretation of information (perception)
- Prevent
  - Fight- behavior
  - Flight- escape
  - Freeze- shutdown

# Sensory Diets can be used in every natural setting

- Home
- School
- Community

## **Fun-ctional Sensory Diets can be used as a component in every Methodology or treatment technique**

- ABA
- FLOORTIME
- PECS
- SCERTS
- SCHOOLS ATTUNED
- SENSORY INTEGRATION PROGRAMS
- SONRISE
- TEACCH
- TOUCHPOINTS

# Methodologies

- Sensory Diets work for all methodologies because they all require nervous system regulation for attending and responding.

# Benefits of Sensory Diets

- can be use for regulation from birth through adulthood
- present social/emotional opportunities in natural settings
- provide a sense of well being and self confidence
- life strategies for anxiety reduction and neurological regulation
- Team building and cooperative participation opportunities
- Sampling for creating vocational and career interests
- promotes family life strategies for recreation

# Steps for Developing a Sensory Diet

- Explorer Stage: what objects or movements did the child like?
- Detective Stage: Observation /Activity Analysis
- Supporter Stage: provide motor breaks or objects to find a balance
- Develop a schedule with breaks or external supports
- Social/Emotional Guide Stage: provide social-emotional supports with tangible supports.

# Example

- 8:00 wake up with a clock radio
- 8:10 jump on trampoline for 8 minutes
- 8:20 eat breakfast
- 8:30 brush teeth with an electric toothbrush
- 8:40 get ready for school wearing heavy backpack
- 9:00 arrive at school
- 9:05 push a weighted cart to classroom
- 9:15 go to math class and sit on disc
- 10:30 use a tilting footrest under desk during english



# Activities for Sensory Diets

- See notes section of this slide