

Real Impacts of Sensory and Social Emotional Regulation

Takeaways Handout | December 2023

Sensory Informed Strategies

1. Understand that children are as competent as they can be within their developmental and neurological capabilities.
2. Identify the strategies the child uses (internal, external and relational) to regulate.

Process to providing Sensory informed strategies:

- Observe the child in different settings and situations - Learn and understand **how the child processes sensory information and what they use for self-regulation.**
- Observe the parent/caregiver-child relationship.
 - **Begin with coregulation support.**
 - Give caregivers permission to feel the discomfort of the moment and share their regulation with the child. Emphasize safe and connected relationships as a foundation.
- Review daily routines within the context of the family, that may have opportunities for increased consistency and structure, to minimize stress
- Investigate with a **WATCH AND WONDER APPROACH**, asking “wh” questions
- **What is motivating a behavior?**
- **What is making the child dysregulated,**
 - is it internal or external sensory conditions. Is it pain, is it connected to or triggered by past trauma?
 - **What purpose does the child’s response serve-** is it an emotional response (excitement/joy) or calming?
 - **Why is he doing a particular behavior,** does it help?
 - **What is the child feeling,** anxious, scared, confused, overwhelmed, bored?
 - Use Task analysis to examine a particular situation or activity to identify or isolate a particular barrier or challenge.
- Provide highly individualized support. Trial and Error, in close collaboration with the child’s caregiver.

Implementing Diversity-Informed EI Practices

Assessment for Service Planning (ASP)

- Gather information regarding the family unit and unique perspectives using ethnographic interviewing
- Understand family preferences with names/pronouns
- Make note of preferred languages
- Offer interpretation to minimize communication barriers



IFSP Summaries

- Word choice matters
- Strength-based narratives vs. deficits based
- Be sensitive to literacy consideration

Outcomes (Goals)

- Individualize goals with special attention to the family's culture, beliefs, and social-economic considerations
- Focus on the child's participation in meaningful activities tailored to their sensory profile vs. "normalizing" behaviors

Intervention Strategies

- Integrate individual family values and beliefs on child-rearing
- Child strength and interest-based strategies vs. Compliance-based strategies
- Prioritize sensory regulation needs as it is necessary for active participation and learning vs. using sensory strategies as a "reward"

