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Sensory Processing

When we think about self-regulation and what it is, we have to think about sensory processing. All of us take in information about the environment around us, what we see and hear and feel as well as the messages we get within our body about movement. All of these are integral to us being able to respond appropriately. For example if a child is engaged in a ball game, they have to obviously use their sight to watch the ball, they then also have to be aware of the muscle movement and the direction of their movement, the force of their movement so that they can have their hands in the right position to catch the ball. Whilst also being able to balance and stabilise themselves with their core. There is a lot happening in that one action of catching the ball. When we watch children engaged in different activities, we are always looking at what is impacting that child's function and with children with challenges, it may well be that it's that ability to make sense of specific information coming through one of those systems or many of those systems that mean they cannot perform that action accurately, effectively or consistently.

You may find that they register sensation in an amplified way; some children feel touch in a much more amplified way than you or I so they become quite wary and alert to what different textures may touch them, how often they are touched, whether they are being touched unexpectedly and in a school environment that can be fairly constant that you have incidental unexpected touch. Other children may find it extremely difficult when trying to cope with the noises within the environment so they then become quite distressed by too much noise or loud unexpected noises. Some children become quite distressed by too much movement, too intense or too frequent so then disengage and don't want to be a part of the activity. It's imperative that we try and work with mum and dad to understand what actually causes their child to become distressed and not want to participate, what actually supports them and there will be sensory activities and sensory preferences and all of us have those so some of us will prefer to be active all of the time, some of us prefer to be a little bit quieter and it's just looking at what are our child's preferences and how can we use those to enable him to engage more, emotionally with us, to engage more energetically with the task as well as who he is doing it with.

*** This is an approximate transcription only; minor modifications have been made to assist the reader.*