**Are Sensory Issues the Underlying Cause of Behaviour?**

The nature of ASD is such that many children will be over or under reactive to sensory stimuli. The latest Diagnostic Standards Manual DSM-5 that came out in May 2013 finally recognised that sensory processing difficulties are a part of ASD. Some children will have a dual diagnosis of a Sensory Processing Disorder. Others it will just be part of their ASD.

**Sometimes, it is easier to change the environment than change the child.**

Simple changes in the environment can make a big difference to a child’s engagement and learning outcomes. You could spend all day asking a child to “sit still” on the mat or you could give them a “sensory mat” to sit on that helps them sit still. Read more below or go to page with sensory ideas, strategies and resources follow this link

<http://suelarkey.com.au/sensory-shop/>

[www.suelarkey.com](http://www.suelarkey.com)

**Often sensory can be the underlying cause of so much distress and behaviour.**

Children can be hypersensitive (over sensitive) or hyposensitive (under sensitive) to touch, taste, smell, sound, sight and/or movement. Occupational Therapists are normally the specialists who assess children’s sensory processing and implement programs to regulate their senses or address sensory needs. In my experience many children need sensory adaptions in the classroom.

By regulating the amount and intensity of stimulation it helps to keep the nervous system calm, organised and focused. Children can be under-aroused and sluggish one moment, and overwhelmed and anxious the next. Meeting sensory needs can include using sensory tools to regulate behaviour or adapting activities to reduce sensory stimulation. For example some children can sit for longer periods with a sensory tool/fidget tool. While other children may need clothing adaptions, e.g. socks with no over-locking for them to wear shoes and socks. See below for some great adaptions.

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