A short simple story that teaches a child strategies for handling their over responsiveness during a targeted occupation.

Children with sensory modulation difficulties have barriers to participation in various tasks.

Sensory Stories: a tool to increase children’s participation in typical events.

Children with over-responsive sensory modulation issues that impact their ability to engage in occupations.

Brushing Teeth

Social Stories + Sensory Strategies = Sensory Stories

Bathing
Combing Hair
Ear Cleaning
Eating
Getting Dressed in the Morning
Nail Care
Showering
Sleeping
Tooth Brushing
Washing Hair
Pre-written School Sensory Stories
- Assemblies
- Being in Lines
- Cafeteria
- Circle Time / Floor Time
- Desk Time
- Eating Time
- Moving in the School
- Outdoor Recess
- Physical Education Class
- School Bus Ride

Pre-written Community Sensory Stories
- Getting a Haircut
- Going to a Restaurant
- Going to a Store
- Going to Parties
- Going to Places of Worship
- Going to the Dentist
- Going to the Doctor
- Riding in an Elevator
- Riding in the Car
- Riding on an Escalator

Theoretical background:
- Sensory Integration/Sensory Processing: Focus is the child with a modulation problem (overresponsive)
- Cognitive Behavioral: Self control through empowerment
- Teaching/Learning Process: Visual and auditory input coupled with practice

Two types of Sensory Strategies in Sensory Stories
1. Strategies that provide inhibitory sensory input to the child.
2. Strategies that minimize sensory input from the environment.

Here is a Sensory Story

Assemblies
A story for

An assembly is a special time in the school day when children go to a big room. There they listen and learn from special people.
Sometimes it is noisy and crowded. Some children don't like being in crowded places. They don't like the noise. They also don't like being bumped.

I can do special things to make it easier to go to assemblies. Before I go to the assembly, I can put on my heavy fanny pack. That helps me to be calm.

Then I might put on my headphones. That makes it less noisy.

When I get to my seat at the assembly, I can do an elbow check to make sure no one is sitting too close.

During the assembly, I can make my muscles tight like a statue. Then I take a deep breath and relax.

When I'm sitting and listening, I can push my hands down really hard on my legs and then give myself a big hug. These activities make it easier to listen.
When the assembly is over, I can stretch my arms up high and take another deep breath. Assemblies at school can be fun!

Who would use this Sensory Story?
- The child who:
  - is over-responsive to sensory information
  - has an unsuccessful routine with attending a school assembly
  - has negative behaviors when it comes time to attend a school assembly

How would a Sensory Story be used?
- The story would be read daily to the child prior to and/or during the activity.
- Therapists/teachers/parents can read the story to the child
- The child can read the story him/herself
- Stories can be read daily (regularly occurring events)
- Commit to a 3 month period of reading the story to allow a successful routine to develop
- Stories can be read frequently prior to the event (irregularly occurring events)

Customizing an Existing Sensory Story
- Change the text to meet the child’s individual needs
  - Preferred words, elevated language, simplified language
- Change the sensory strategy
  - Menu of options available
- Change the stated effect
- Add the child’s name
- Decorate the cover page
- Make a booklet for the story

Format for Writing a Sensory Story
1. Introduction to the targeted experience
2. Identification of the potential negative sensory input during that experience
3. Acknowledgement that the experience can be unpleasant/uncomfortable
4. Strategies that can prepare the child for the experience
5. Outlining the steps of the experience and the strategies to be used during the experience
6. Strategies at the conclusion of the experience
7. Ending the story on a positive note
1. Introduction to the targeted experience
   - An assembly is a special time in the school day when children go to a big room. There they listen and learn from special people.

2 & 3 Identification of the potential negative sensory input during that experience
   Acknowledgement that the experience can be unpleasant/uncomfortable
   - Sometimes it is noisy and crowded. Some children don't like being in crowded places. They don't like the noise. They also don't like being bumped.

4. Strategies that can prepare the child for the experience
   - I can do special things to make it easier to go to assemblies. Before I go to the assembly I can put on my heavy fanny pack. That helps me to be calm.
   - Then I might put on my headphones. That makes it less noisy.
   - When I get to my seat at the assembly, I can do an elbow check to make sure no one is sitting too close.

5. Outlining the steps of the experience and the strategies to be used during the experience
   - During the assembly, I can make my muscles tight like a statue. Then I take a deep breath and relax.
   - When I'm sitting and listening, I can push my hands down really hard on my legs and then give myself a big hug. These activities make it easier to listen.

6. Strategies at the conclusion of the experience
   - When the assembly is over, I can stretch my arms up high and take another deep breath.

7. Ending the story on a positive note
   - Assemblies at school can be fun!

The Challenge ...
   - Determine a situation for which a SENSORY Story would be appropriate
   - Determine the unpleasant sensations associated with that particular activity
   - Identify calming sensory strategies that match the unpleasant sensation
     - Tactile \rightarrow Tactile
     - Proprioceptive \rightarrow Proprioceptive
     - Vestibular \rightarrow Vestibular
   - Identify environmental and activity modifications that can limit the unpleasant sensations
Helpful Hints:

- Keep the language at an appropriate level for the reader.
- Try to be as concise as possible
- Limit use of directive sentences
- Instead use suggestive sentences: I can... I like to... It helps me to...
- Analyze the sensory properties of the event and choose strategies that match those challenges

Evidence to Support Sensory Stories

- There are 9 Level 4 studies conducted to date on Sensory Stories
- Studies have included stories for school, home and community
- All studies indicate that the majority of children who try them have some type of positive outcome
- More research is planned over the next several years

Thanks for Attending!!!!

Questions and Suggestions ??

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References
