



“All behavior is communication”

There are many possible reasons / functions for their behavior

Communication (“why are we going to the shops, you said park?”)

Routine (“We don’t usually go this way to school”)

Social attention (“Every time I throw my drink on the floor you engage with me.”)

Sensory (“When we go on the bus it is noisy, I don’t like it.”)

Getting a need (“I’m hungry I need a snack; I’m going to climb to help myself to get a biscuit”)

Escape/ avoidance (“I’m really enjoying playing with my cars”)

Express emotion (“I feel anxious, but I don’t understand these feelings and can’t tell anyone about it.”)

Emotions your child may show....

Mad – feeling of rage, anger, defiance or fury

Sad – feeling of grief, loss or regret.

Glad – feeling of joy, contentment, excitement and happiness

Remember all emotions are valid



The Amygdala Hijack!

- First, we feel
- Then we think
- Then we act

The emotional brain (Amygdala) existed before the thinking brain (Neocortex).

In young children the emotional brain can be in the driving seat! When these feelings they may be strong and will often miss out the thinking and go straight to acting.



Teaching you child about emotions is just as important as learning to read or count.

Too much information = Sensory Tsunami!

“A person who struggles to deal with everyday sensory information can experience Sensory overload, or information overload. Too much information can cause stress, anxiety and possibly physical pain.”

This can result in:

- Withdrawal
- Challenging behavior
- Meltdowns



Self-regulation

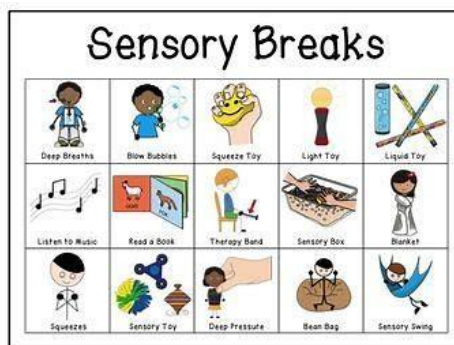
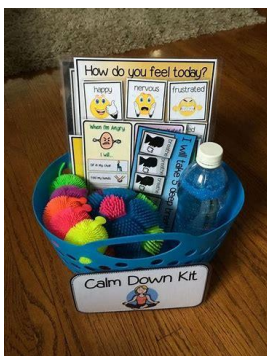
A person's ability to adjust and control their energy levels, emotions, behavior and attention.

- Regulating their attention
- Regulating their behavior
- Regulating their emotions



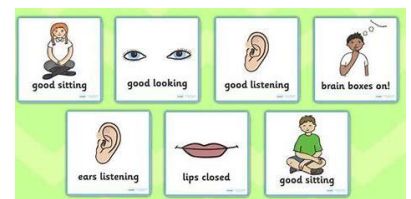
Some strategies for managing sensory regulation

- Assess the situation- don't assume it is "behavior"
- Environment changes
- Messy play
- Visuals – How do I feel
- Sensory circuits
- Social stories
- Bubbles
- Calm town kit / tent/ quiet area
- Tactile support – firm hugs, rocking or massages.



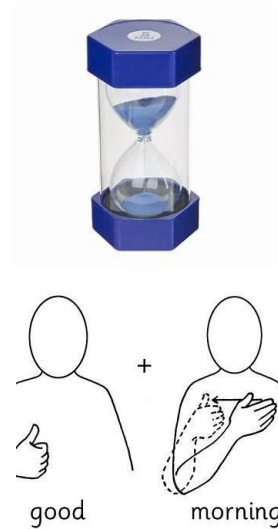
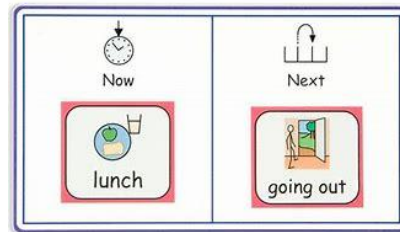
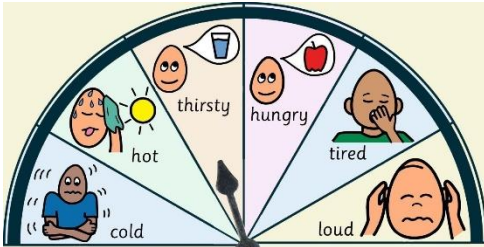
What practical things can I do?

- Use limited, clear and concise language
- Use a calm voice, limited expression and body language
- Ensure that you get down to the child's level
- When giving instructions use the child's name
- Use positive language and give an instruction e.g 'hands down.'
- Refrain from saying 'NO'
- Try not to refer to negative behavior
- Use count downs when items/ activities are going to end
- Build in an element of choice where possible
- Ensure that you follow a clear routine and always giving advanced warning of change to routine
- Ensure activities appropriately matched to abilities/ interests.



Visual aids to support understanding

- Makaton signs
- Objects of reference – support understanding
- Pictures or symbols visuals 'now and next'
- Sand timer – so child is clear about time expectations



Reinforcing positive behavior

- Ignore
- Distract
- Use children's interests
- Praise / reward and appropriate sanctions – need to build self-esteem
- Catch your child being good and praise them
- Movement breaks, sensory input
- Teach social / emotional skills
- Instant rewards, labelled praise or reward charts