

# Selected Therapies

*This list includes basic information about some professionals and their therapies that may benefit a child with Sensory Processing Disorder. For more details, follow the links or see [www.SPDFoundation.net](http://www.SPDFoundation.net)*

## PRIMARY THERAPIES

### Occupational Therapy Using a Sensory Integration Framework (OT-SI)

Professional: Occupational Therapist

Occupational therapy is the use of purposeful activity to maximize the independence and maintenance of health of an individual who is limited by a physical injury or illness, cognitive impairment, a psychosocial dysfunction, a mental illness, a developmental or learning disability, or an adverse environmental condition. The practice encompasses evaluation, assessment, treatment, and consultation. For a child, purposeful activities include swinging, climbing, jumping, buttoning, drawing and writing. Such activities are the child's "occupation."

An occupational therapist is a health professional that has received a post-baccalaureate degree after completing a course of study, plus internship experience, in biological, physical, medical, and behavioral sciences. Coursework includes neurology, anatomy, orthopedics, psychology, and psychiatry.

The occupational therapist may work with your child individually or in a group, at school, in a clinic, hospital, community mental health center, or your home. The ideal occupational therapist is one who specializes in pediatrics and who has received additional, postgraduate training in sensory integration theory and treatment. The specific goals of occupational therapy using a sensory integration (OT-SI) framework are to improve the person's social participation, self-esteem, self-regulation and sensory-motor abilities.

Under the guidance of a therapist, the child actively takes in movement and touch information in playful, meaningful, and natural ways that help his brain modulate these fundamental neural messages. The child responds favorably to SI treatment, because his nervous system is pliable and changeable. Therapy teaches the child to succeed—and he *loves* it!

To find an occupational therapist certified to diagnose and treat sensory processing problems, search (for free) in the Treatment Directory at [www.SPDFoundation.net](http://www.SPDFoundation.net) for therapists near you. Or (for a small fee), go to Developmental Delay Resources, [www.devdelay.org](http://www.devdelay.org).

### Physical Therapy

Professional: Physical Therapist

Physical therapy is a health profession devoted to improving an individual's physical abilities. It involves activities that strengthen the child's muscular control and motor coordination, especially of his large muscles. Sometimes using physical agents such as massage, whirlpool baths or ultrasound, physical therapists help the child get his muscles ready for voluntary movement. Some physical therapists receive additional training in sensory integration theory and treatment (PT-SI). Contact: American Physical Therapy Association, [www.apta.org/apta/findapt/index.aspx?navID=10737422525](http://www.apta.org/apta/findapt/index.aspx?navID=10737422525)

## SECONDARY THERAPIES (in alphabetical order)

### Auditory Therapy, or Auditory Training

Professional: Audiologist, Speech-and-Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, or other qualified specialist

A method of sound stimulation designed to improve a person's listening and communicative skills, learning capabilities, motor coordination, body awareness & self-esteem. Various methods employ the use of special headphones. Over several days, the child listens passively to music and voices filtered through the headphones and then participates in active voice work, such as repeating sounds, reading aloud, and conversing. Therapy helps the ear to attend to and discriminate among sounds, the vestibular system to integrate sensory messages of balance and posture, and the person to become more focused, centered, and organized. The Therapeutic Listening Program, designed by Sheila Frick, OTR/L, is an excellent home program that is supervised by a therapist while the child is receiving services. See: [www.integratedlistening.com](http://www.integratedlistening.com) or [www.VitalLinks.net](http://www.VitalLinks.net)

### Brain Gym®

Professional: Licensed Brain Gym® Practitioner

The Brain Gym® system is a set of 26 specific movements developed by Paul Dennison, PhD, based on research in Educational Kinesiology. Educational Kinesiology studies education, child development, and physical movement of the human body as it relates to learning and expression skills. The system readies the body to learn by integrating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic functioning. It stimulates the nervous system equally in all brain parts, minimizes one-sided brain reactions, and strengthens neural pathways between the two hemispheres. The activities effect rapid and often dramatic improvements in concentration, memory, reading, writing, organizing, listening, physical coordination, and more. See [www.braingym.org](http://www.braingym.org)

### Chiropractic

Professional: Chiropractor

Chiropractic is the philosophy, art and science of detecting and correcting subluxation in the human body. Subluxation is a partial dislocation or abnormal movement of a bone in a joint. Chiropractic helps children with SPD by specifically addressing the structure and function of the nerves, muscles and joints controlling posture and movement that influence our ability to interact with our environment. [www.icpa4kids.com](http://www.icpa4kids.com) or [www.chiroweb.com/find/children.html](http://www.chiroweb.com/find/children.html)

### CranioSacral Therapy (CST)

Professional: Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Chiropractor, Osteopath, Massage Therapist, or other Registered Craniosacral Practitioner (RCST)

CST is a gentle method of evaluating and enhancing the function of the craniosacral system (the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid that protect the brain & spinal cord). CST involves light-touch manipulation of the bones in the skull, sacrum and coccyx to correct an imbalance that can adversely affect the development of the brain and spinal cord and can result in sensory, motor, and neurological dysfunction. Developed by Dr. John Upledger, CST is used by a variety of healthcare professionals. Contact: The Upledger Institute, [www.upledger.com](http://www.upledger.com), 800-233-5880, or [www.craniosacraltherapy.org](http://www.craniosacraltherapy.org)

### Hippotherapy (therapy with a horse)

Professional: Certified Instructor

Hippotherapy means “treatment with the help of the horse.” Occupational, physical and speech therapists use the horse as a modality to improve the posture, movement, neuromotor function and sensory processing of people with disabilities. The movement of the horse, with traditional therapy intervention, influences muscle tone, encourages muscle action, & improves vestibular reactions, sensorimotor integration, and midline postural control. See [www.pathintl.org](http://www.pathintl.org) or [www.americanhippotherapyassociation.org](http://www.americanhippotherapyassociation.org)

### Integrated Listening Systems

Professional: OT, SLP, PT, Educator, Counselor, Neuro-feedback practitioner, Chiropractor, Naturopath, Athletic trainer, Psychologist, Neuropsychologist, and other Clinicians

Based on the discoveries of Dr. Alfred Tomatis, Integrated Learning Systems (iLs) “re-train” parts of the brain involved in learning, communicating, and moving. Combining an auditory program with specific visual and balance activities, iLs strengthens neurological pathways and improves the person’s ability to learn and to process information. The three main systems for organizing sensory input — visual, auditory, and balance (vestibular) — are highly interrelated. Stimulating all three at the same time is a holistic approach that can help people of all ages and developmental stages to feel more focused and self-confident. Influencing a broad spectrum of daily functions, iLs improves reading, writing, and cognition; visual and auditory processing; concentration and memory; and balance and coordination. iLs also promotes recovery of executive functions after head injuries, improves emotional well-being, and helps children with SLP and children on the autistic spectrum. See [www.integratedlistening.com](http://www.integratedlistening.com)

### Nutritional Therapy, Dietary Intervention

Professional: Nutritionist

Good nutrition is essential for development, efficient maintenance and functioning, optimum activity level, and resistance to infection and disease. A nutritionist can help a person with nutritional deficiencies achieve balance in carbohydrates, fats, protein, vitamins, minerals, and water. Contact: Autism Network for Dietary Intervention, [www.AutismNDI.com](http://www.AutismNDI.com)

### Perceptual Motor Therapy

Professional: Perceptual Motor Therapist

Perceptual motor therapy provides integrated movement experiences that remediate gross motor, fine motor, and visual perception problems. Activities, including sensory input techniques, stimulate left- and right-brain communication to help the child interpret incoming information to the nervous system. Goals are to improve visual motor perception, develop more mature patterns of response to specific stimuli, improve motor skills and balance, and stimulate alternate routes to memory and sequencing for those children who do not respond to the methods taught in the conventional classroom. Contact: Kids Moving Co., [www.kidsmovingco.com](http://www.kidsmovingco.com), (301) 656-1543.

## Psychotherapy

Professional: Psychotherapist, Clinical Psychologist, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Psychiatrist

Psychotherapy is sometimes appropriate, particularly if the child has behavior or self-image problems or is depressed. (Psychotherapy deals with the effects of SI disorder, but not the underlying causes.) Psychotherapies include behavioral therapy, to help the child deal with problematical symptoms and behaviors; family therapy, to help the child, parents and siblings become a healthier unit; and play therapy, to promote the child's social-emotional development. See [www.icdl.com](http://www.icdl.com)

## Speech and Language Therapy

Professional: Speech/Language Pathologist (SLP)

Speech-language therapy includes activities designed to meet specific goals for the child. The child may need help with speech skills, such as pronouncing "L," "K," or "Sh" sounds; monitoring the pitch of his voice; and strengthening oral-motor control in the muscles of his mouth. He may also benefit from activities designed to expand his language skills, such as retelling stories, conversing, and playing games to develop memory and vocabulary. As many children with SPD are picky eaters, therapy with a speech pathologist trained in oral-motor and feeding issues may be very helpful. Indeed, when the child receives co-treatment simultaneously from an occupational therapist trained in this area, optimal benefits of getting in the mouth occur. Contact American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org) or 1-800-638-TALK.

## Vision Therapy, or Vision Training (VT)

Professional: Developmental (or Behavioral) Optometrist

Vision therapy, or optometric visual training, helps the person improve visual skills and can also prevent learning-related visual problems. Along with lenses or prisms, VT helps the child integrate visual information with input from other senses, such as hearing, touching, and moving. A developmental optometrist provides sensory-motor and educational activities that strengthen eye-motor control, eye-hand coordination and depth perception, and help develop visual perception. Contact [www.optometrists.org](http://www.optometrists.org); or Optometric Extension Program Foundation: [www.oepf.org](http://www.oepf.org), (949) 250-8070; or the website of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development: [www.covd.org](http://www.covd.org); or Parents Active for Vision Education: [www.pavevision.org](http://www.pavevision.org), 800-PAVE-988.

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Jereb, Gen. *Cool Bananas, Jumpin' Jellybeans, Say G'day*; et al. [gellybeanrecords@hotmail.com](mailto:gellybeanrecords@hotmail.com)

Various artists. *Danceland; Look at My World; Marvelous Mouth Sounds; Mozart Effect for Children, Vol. 1; Songames for SI; Soothing the Senses; 28 Instant Songames; The Wiggly Scarecrow* and other CDs that Carol uses in presentations are available at [www.SensoryWorld.com](http://www.SensoryWorld.com)

# **"MAGIC DRAWER" MATERIALS FOR SENSORY PROCESSING**

(from "The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun: Activities for Kids with SPD," available from [www.sensoryworld.com](http://www.sensoryworld.com))

## **HOUSEHOLD ITEMS**

Bowls, cookie cutters, cookie sheets  
Rolling pins, eating utensils, kitchen gadgets  
Cooking pots, roasting pans, pie tins  
Cake decorating supplies  
Cafeteria trays, plastic place mats  
Clear plastic jars  
Spray bottles  
Sponges  
Buckets, dish pans, laundry tubs, trash cans  
Small objects including coins, keys, paper clips, buttons, toothpicks, poker chips  
Bedding/linens, e.g., pillows, sheets, comforters, spreads, towels, washcloths, sleeping bags  
Tarpaulin, oilcloth, or shower curtain  
Clothes basket and clothespins  
Shoelaces and clothing accessories  
Dress-ups  
Large mirror  
Magnifying glass  
Rope  
Flashlights  
Magnets  
CD player  
Stopwatch

## **GROCERIES AND DRUGSTORE ITEMS TO PLAY WITH**

Cereal O's  
Corn syrup  
Cornstarch and flour  
Dry beans, rice, popcorn, and pasta  
Food coloring  
Dishwashing liquid  
Drinking straws  
Lunch bags  
Resealable plastic bags  
Paper/plastic plates and cups  
Cotton balls  
Diaper pins  
Kitty litter  
Shaving cream, bath foam, hand lotion  
Tweezers  
Vinyl gloves, finger cots

## **SUPPLIES FROM THE ARTS/CRAFTS STORE, STATIONERY AISLE, FABRIC SHOP**

Beads  
Sequins, sparkles, stickers  
Colored cellophane  
Construction paper, tissue paper, crepe paper  
Brown packaging paper  
Drawing/writing paper  
Envelopes of different sizes  
Index file cards  
Corrugated cardboard, poster board  
Large plastic or cardboard storage boxes  
Scissors, stapler, ruler  
Masking tape, duct tape  
Glue  
Crayons, markers, pens, pencils  
Finger paint, tempera paint  
Paintbrushes  
Smocks  
Chalk, chalkboard  
Easel  
Fabric tubing  
Fabric swatches of different textures  
Ribbons  
Sewing needles, tapestry needles  
Thread, yarn  
Velcro strips

## **HARDWARE STORE/GARDEN STORE ITEMS**

Dowels  
Wooden and plywood boards  
2 x 4s and railroad timbers  
Stepping stones  
Wood screws  
Hammers, nails  
Long metal carriage bolts  
Wooden mallets, rubber-tipped mallets  
Flower pots  
Hose, spray nozzle  
Gutters, gutter joiners  
Milk crates  
Rope  
Sand  
Sandpaper  
Vinyl aquarium tubing

## **MISCELLANEOUS CONSUMABLES AND "BEAUTIFUL JUNK"**

Balloons  
Bottle caps  
Boxes of all sizes  
Bubble gum  
Bubble wrap, packaging "peanuts," foam packaging material  
Cardboard cylinders (from wrapping paper and paper towel rolls)  
Carpet samples or squares  
Coffee and orange juice cans, margarine tubs, disposable plastic food containers  
Corks  
Empty detergent or ketchup squirt bottles  
Egg cartons  
Film canisters  
Old telephone books, magazines, catalogs  
Paper and plastic grocery bags  
Paper plates  
Plastic water jugs and one-liter soda bottles  
Popsicle sticks  
String  
Plastic foam meat trays  
Shells, pebbles, acorns  
Tree-trunk sections, logs, sticks, twigs

## **TOYS AND PLAY EQUIPMENT**

Blocks  
Balls of all sizes  
Plastic baseball bat or T-ball bat  
Koosh balls, squeeze toys, hand "fidgets"  
Beanbags  
Hula hoops  
Climber and swing set; tire swing  
Drums  
Bubbles  
Finger puppets, hand puppets  
Stuffed animals  
Bendable doll  
Dice  
Dominoes  
Foam letters and numbers  
Jigsaw puzzles  
Marbles  
Small cars, boats, dinosaurs, people, bears, and other figures



## Activities to Develop and Enhance Sensory Modulation

ALIVE, AWAKE, ALERT, ENTHUSIASTIC (thanks to Mary Sue Williams and Sherry Shellenberger)

BUS DRIVER (thanks to my grandson, Asher Kranowitz)

DOTS AND SQUEEZIES (thanks to Debra Em Wilson and Margot Heiniger-White and their *S'cool Moves for Learning*)

PAPER PLATE SYMPHONY (see *The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun*, 293)

PACING PATH Masking tape on the floor at rear of classroom

HOLD UP THE WALL (see *In-Sync Activity Cards*, 6)

BOTTLE BABIES with 2-liter soda bottles (see *The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun*, 93)

LEVITATION (see *In-Sync Activity Cards*, 10)

SQUEEZIT! (see *The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun*, 280,) and ACCORDION SQUEEZE

BUS DRIVER with bicycle inner tube (see *Growing an In-Sync Child*, 102)

♪ STRETCHY BANDS (thanks to Mozart, whose “Twinkle, Twinkle” is on Don Campbell’s CD, *The Mozart Effect for Children*, Vol. 1 see *The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun*, 108)

### OTHER SENSORY EXPERIENCES:

- Deep Pressure touch like a massage
- Proprioception sensation of muscles and joints stretching and moving
- Heavy work resistive activities for muscles (pushing, pulling, lifting, and carrying)
- Rhythmic movement swinging, rocking, jumping, tumbling

# Activities to Develop and Enhance Sensory Discrimination

## Tactile

RUBBER BAND GUITAR with cigar box

KP DUTY (see *In-Sync Activity Cards*, 27)

## Visual

PEOPLE CLASSIFICATION and OBJECT CLASSIFICATION

METRONOME CODE (thanks to Sanford Cohen, O.D., developmental optometrist;  
see *The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun*, 145)

## Auditory

DRUMROLL, PLEASE (see *Growing an In-Sync Child*, 110)

ENVIRONMENTAL RHYTHM BAND

Mother Nature's musical instruments include:

- Rhythm sticks foot-long branch sections
- Shakers dried seed pods, short leafy branches, tall grasses and reeds, corn husks, gourds, dried seaweed
- Tone blocks seashells, smooth stones, walnuts
- Guiros corn-on-the-cob

♪ NON-COMPETITIVE MUSICAL CHAIRS (thanks to Aubrey Lande, OTR, and friends, for "Musical Chairs" on their CD, *Songames for SI*)

BODY BATON on trampoline or mattress (see *In-Sync Activity Cards*, 1)

## Vestibular

TEETER-TOTTER (see *The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun*, 64)

T-STOOL games, e.g., SLIDE WHISTLE MOVES (see *Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun*, 62)

## Proprioceptive

♪ GROUP DANCE (thanks to Barbara Sher)

SHAPE STRETCH (see *In-Sync Activity Cards*, 35)

OPPOSITES ATTRACT (see *Growing an In-Sync Child*, 80)



## Activities to Develop and Enhance Sensory-Based Motor Skills

COME HERE, THUMB (see *In-Sync Activity Cards*, 22)

CREEPINATOR (see *In-Sync Activity Cards*, 23)

GET SNAKY (thanks to Joye Newman)

PEOPLE OBSTACLE COURSE (see *In-Sync Activity Cards*, 32)

🎵 PAPER BAG PUNCH BALL (thanks to Gen Jereb for “Ain’t That Funky Now?” on her CD, *Jumpin’ Jellybeans* see *The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun*, 99)

PAPER PLATE PLAY (see *Growing an In-Sync Child*, 136)

🎵 SKATING ON PLATES (thanks to Aubrey Lande, et al., for the musical track “Forest Stump” on their CD, *Songames for SI*)

ARM CIRCLES (see *Growing an In-Sync Child*, 97)

SOUND STRETCH (based on Don Campbell’s “Vowel Movement”; see *In-Sync Activity Cards*, 35)

- A Hands on thighs
- E Hands on shins
- I Hands on ankles
- O Hands on toes
- U Hands on heart center

🎵 DO THE MONKEY (thanks to Gen Jereb for “Let Me See You Do the Monkey” on her CD, *Say G’Day*)

🎵 PAPER PLATE DANCE (thanks to Mozart, whose “Rondo” is on Don Campbell’s CD, *The Mozart Effect for Children*, Vol. 1; see *The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun*, 157))

# ALIVE, AWAKE, ALERT, ENTHUSIASTIC

Tune: "If You're Happy and You Know It"

From *Test Drive: Introducing the Alert Program through Song*,  
by Mary Sue Williams, OTR/L, and Sherry Shellenberger, OTR/L  
(used with permission)

Alive (*touch toes*),

Awake (*touch knees*),

Alert (*touch shoulders*),

Enthusiastic (*reach for sky*)!

*(Repeat above lines, and then just . . .)*

Alive, awake, alert,

Alert, awake, alive,

*(... and finish with ....)*

Alive (*touch toes*),

Awake (*touch knees*),

Alert (*touch shoulders*),

Enthusiastic (*reach for sky*)!

*(Repeat the whole song, faster each time.)*