

7 Senses Kids

MAGAZINE

WINTER
2026



FINE MOTOR
FUN

LEVEL UP THOSE
SCHOOL SKILLS

SI IN ST

HOW OUR SPEECH
THERAPISTS UNDERSTAND
THE IMPORTANCE OF
SENSORY INTEGRATION

7 SENSORY
SYSTEMS AT
YOUR
SERVICE+1
MORE



SPEECH-LET'S
TALK ARR-TIHC.

7 SENSES KIDS
MAGAZINE



CONTENTS

5
Understanding the
8 Sensory Systems

8
Level-Up the
School Skills

4
ABOUT US



3
Editor's Note

5
The Eight Sensory Systems

6
Speech Therapy- Articulation
Tips and Tricks to get the kiddos speaking clearly

7
Fine Motor Fun
Discover motivating tasks that tackle those skills.

9
Speech Therapy and Sensory
Incorporating Sensory Processing into Speech Sessions

11
Contact Us

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Editor's Note

7 SENSES KIDS: AVENUE VIERA

Dear Community,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of 7 Senses Kids, our new educational magazine dedicated to bridging the gap between clinical therapy and practical parenting.

As the team at 7 Senses Kids, we understand that navigating the world of pediatric development can sometimes feel overwhelming. You may hear terms like "sensory integration," "articulation disorder," or "fine motor delay," and wonder exactly what they mean for your child and how therapy truly helps.

Our goal with this publication is simple: to empower you with clear, actionable knowledge.

In this issue, we dive into the foundational role of sensory processing—the literal blueprint for how your child experiences the world—and explore the eight systems that govern their behavior and attention. We also offer expert insights from both our Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) and Occupational Therapists (OTs) on topics ranging from practical tips for improving articulation and fun fine motor activities to how therapy directly translates to school success.



We believe in a collaborative, holistic approach, which is why we've also included an article demonstrating how our SLPs and OTs work together, recognizing that a regulated body and mind are essential preconditions for effective communication. Thank you for trusting us with your child's journey. We look forward to connecting with you and supporting your family's growth and development! Happy New Year and welcome to our Winter issue! God Bless!

Lauren Flores
Co-Owner, Editor, & Occupational Therapist

7 Senses
Kids

SCAN FOR A QUICK STUDIO TOUR!





ABOUT US

7 SENSES KIDS

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By Lauren Flores



Our Story & Vision

We are so glad you've chosen to connect with us! For over 15 years, 7 Senses Kids has been committed to providing exceptional pediatric therapy services built on expertise, passion, and a genuine love for helping children and families.

Our Roots and Expertise

We officially opened our doors in May 2011, driven by a mission to create a truly integrated and supportive environment for families. Our owners proudly earned their Masters in Occupational Therapy from the University of Florida (Go Gators!), establishing a foundation of clinical excellence and evidence-based practice in everything we do.

Where to Find Us

You can find us conveniently located at The Avenue Viera, where we operate a dedicated, child-friendly therapy studio designed to engage and motivate every child.

Meet Aloha! 🐾

One of the most beloved members of our team is Aloha, our wonderful facility service dog from Canine Companions. Aloha joined us in 2020 and brings a calming presence and unconditional support to our sessions. She helps children feel more comfortable, motivates them during challenging tasks, and truly embodies the warmth of our practice.

Our Comprehensive Services

We believe therapy should fit seamlessly into your life, which is why we offer flexible service delivery models for our Speech Therapy and Occupational Therapy programs:

- In-Studio: Utilizing our fully equipped, sensory-rich studio at The Avenue Viera.
- In-Home: Providing familiar and comfortable support within your child's natural environment.
- School-Based: Collaborating with educators to address skills required for academic success.
- Community: Integrating skills practice out in the community to promote real-world application and generalization.

We look forward to partnering with your family!



SCAN TO SEE
ALOHA IN
ACTION!

7 + 1 = 8 Senses!

Understanding Sensory Processing and the 8 Systems

The Senses

Sensory processing is how we receive, interpret, and respond to information from our senses. For children, effective sensory processing is the foundation for learning, behavior, and social interaction. When a child struggles with processing sensory input, it can lead to challenges like being overly sensitive (avoiding touch/sounds) or under-responsive (constantly seeking movement). This is often where Occupational Therapy (OT) can provide essential support.

The 8 Sensory Systems

Most people are familiar with the first five, but a complete understanding requires looking at all eight:

1. **Tactile (Touch):** How we feel light touch, pressure, pain, and temperature.
2. **Auditory (Hearing):** How we process sounds, distinguishing background noise from important instructions.
3. **Visual (Sight):** How we interpret what we see, track objects, and discern shapes/colors.
4. **Olfactory (Smell):** Our sense of smell.
5. **Gustatory (Taste):** Our sense of taste.
6. **Vestibular (Movement):** Located in the inner ear, this system tells us where our head is in space (balance, movement, gravity).
7. **Proprioception (Body Awareness):** Input from our muscles and joints that tells us where our body parts are and how much force to use (e.g., how hard to hold a pencil).
8. **Interoception (Internal Body Sensation):** Our ability to sense what's happening inside our body (e.g., hunger, thirst, pain, needing to use the restroom, emotions).

Why it matters: Challenges in any of these systems can impact a child's attention, coordination, speech, and emotional regulation.





SPEECH THERAPISTS TALK ARR-TIIC, ARTICULATION

SLP Tip: Keep practice short, fun, and highly motivating!

ST IDEAS

Ideas from Speech Therapists to Help with Articulation

Articulation refers to the clear production of speech sounds (phonemes) using the lips, teeth, tongue, and palate. If your child struggles to produce sounds correctly, a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) uses various evidence-based techniques to help.

Effective Articulation Treatment Strategies

- **Auditory Bombardment:** The SLP repeatedly reads a list of words containing the target sound. The child simply listens, which helps "tune" their ear to the correct sound production.
- **Tactile Cues (Touch Cues):** The therapist gently touches the child's face, neck, or head to guide the placement of the articulators. For example, a gentle tap on the lips for the /p/ sound.
- **Visual Cues (Mirror Work):** Using a mirror so the child can see the difference between the target sound and their error sound. SLPs often use hand gestures to represent the sound's movement.
- **Contextual Therapy:** Practicing the target sound in increasingly complex contexts, starting from isolation (e.g., "s"), then syllables ("sa, se, si"), then words, phrases, sentences, and finally, conversation.
- **Minimal Pairs:** Using pairs of words that differ by only one sound (e.g., "key" vs. "tea") to help the child understand how a sound error changes the meaning of what they say.



The highlight of this journey has been seeing these amazing therapists work with these precious kids and make such wonderful progress!

FINE MOTOR FUN

Fine motor skills involve the coordinated, small movements of the hands, fingers, and eyes. These skills are crucial for independence in daily living and success in school.

Occupational Therapists evaluate children for fine motor coordination and strength deficits and develop a customized treatment plan to improve these skills.

SCAN
FOR AN
OLD
SCHOOL
FINE
MOTOR
ACTIVITY



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SIMPLE ENGAGING FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES

Skill Area	Activity Idea	Materials Needed
Pinch Strength	Tweezer Play: Have your child use child-safe tweezers or tongs to pick up small objects and move them into a container.	Pom-poms, beads, or small LEGOs; tweezers/tongs.
Hand Separation	Lacing & Stringing: Threading large beads onto a shoelace or yarn. This strengthens the "thumb-side" of the hand (for grasp) while the "pinky-side" stabilizes.	Large wooden beads, shoelaces.
Bilateral Coordination	Play-Doh Creations: Rolling, flattening, and cutting Play-Doh requires both hands to work together.	Play-Doh, plastic knife, rolling pin.

In-Hand Manipulation	Coin Slots: Holding 3-5 coins and feeding them one at a time into a piggy bank slot.	Coins (or checkers), piggy bank.
Finger Isolation	Stickers: Peeling and placing small stickers onto paper targets. Use the tips of the fingers only!	Stickers, paper.

**OT INSIGHT: MAKE THE
ACTIVITY ENGAGING! IF THEY
ARE INTERESTED IN
DINOSAURS, HAVE THEM USE
TONGS TO FEED THE
"DINOSAUR."**

OT @ SCHOOL

School Skills

How Occupational Therapy can help improve attention, handwriting, self regulation and more....



Your School success isn't just about academics; it requires a wide array of skills that OT can address, from sitting still at a desk to organizing a backpack. Occupational therapists focus on the "occupations" of childhood—which are learning and playing.

Key School Skills Improved by OT

- **Handwriting:** OT addresses the underlying issues, including hand strength, pencil grasp (often using adaptive grips), letter formation, line adherence, and the speed/endurance needed for written assignments.

- **Attention and Focus:** If a child is over- or under-responsive to sensory input (as discussed in Article 1), it dramatically impacts their focus. OT can recommend sensory “diets” (planned therapeutic activities) or adaptive tools like weighted vests, wiggle cushions, or standing desks to regulate their arousal level.
- **Executive Functioning:** OT can help children develop essential skills for managing tasks, such as organization (managing a desk, binder, and backpack), planning (breaking down a project), and time management.
- **Visual Perceptual Skills:** These are needed to read, copy from the board, recognize patterns, and complete puzzles. OT uses targeted activities to help the eyes and brain work together to interpret visual information accurately.

Contact Us
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Speech Therapy and Sensory Integration

Speech Therapists at 7 Senses Kids incorporate Sensory Integration in their treatments

While Occupational Therapists are the experts in primary sensory integration treatment, modern Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) recognize the profound connection between a child's sensory state and their ability to communicate effectively.

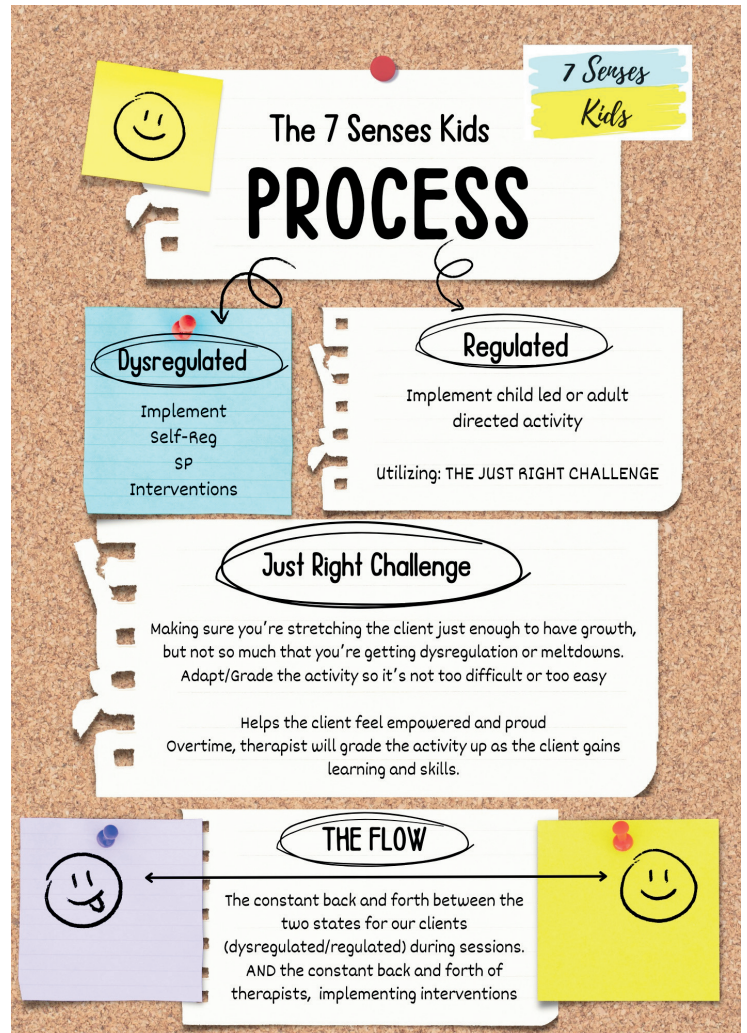
The Sensory-Speech Connection

A child who is highly disorganized or overstimulated cannot attend to or produce speech sounds. They may be too distracted by the scratchy tag on their shirt or the sound of the air conditioning to focus on the SLP's instruction.

How SLPs Integrate Sensory Strategies:

- **Regulation Before Communication:** The SLP might start the session with a sensory warm-up to get the child into an optimal "just right" state for learning. This could involve bouncing on a therapy ball (vestibular input), a deep-pressure "squish," or chewing on a sensory tool (proprioceptive input).
- **Oral-Motor Sensory Input:** SLPs work directly with the mouth (oral-motor area), which is highly sensory. They might use chewy tubes, vibrating tools, or specific foods to increase awareness and motor control needed for feeding and articulation.
- **Movement for Sound Production:** For children needing more proprioceptive feedback, an SLP might incorporate movement while practicing words—saying the word while stomping or pushing against a wall. The extra input helps the child's system "anchor" the motor plan for the sound.

Teamwork: At 7 Senses Kids, our OTs and SLPs collaborate closely, ensuring that sensory strategies support speech goals and vice versa, leading to faster progress and more comprehensive development.



THE HUMAN POGO STICK VS. THE TEXTURE DETECTIVE: WHAT'S YOUR CHILD'S SENSORY STYLE?

THE "AHA!" MOMENT:



WHICH "ARCHETYPE" IS YOUR CHILD?

Every child has a "Sensory Personality." It's the way their brain organizes information from the five senses—plus two "hidden" senses: vestibular (balance/movement) and proprioception (body awareness). Understanding your child's style is like getting a secret decoder ring for their behavior.

1. The Human Pogo Stick (The Seeker)

These children have a "sensory cup" that is never quite full. They are constantly looking for more input to feel "regulated."

- **The Signs:** Crashing into furniture, spinning in circles without getting dizzy, preferring loud music, and "fidgeting" with everything they touch.
- **The OT Tip:** They need "Heavy Work." This includes activities that push or pull against the muscles. Think of it like a "reset" button for their brain.
- **The Home Win:** Have them help carry the heavy laundry basket or do "bear crawls" to the dinner table.

2. The Texture Detective (The Avoider)

These children have a "sensory cup" that overflows at the slightest drop. Their nervous system is on high alert for "danger" in the form of bright lights or scratchy tags.

The Signs: Covering ears at the sound of a vacuum, refusing "mushy" foods, and insisting on specific clothing.

The SLP Tip: This often shows up at mealtime. An Avoider may have a very limited "safe" food list because certain textures feel physically painful or overwhelming in their mouth.

The Home Win: Never force a new food. Instead, practice "food play"—let them touch or smell a new texture with their hands before it ever goes near their mouth.

3. The Deep Dreamer (The Under-Responder)

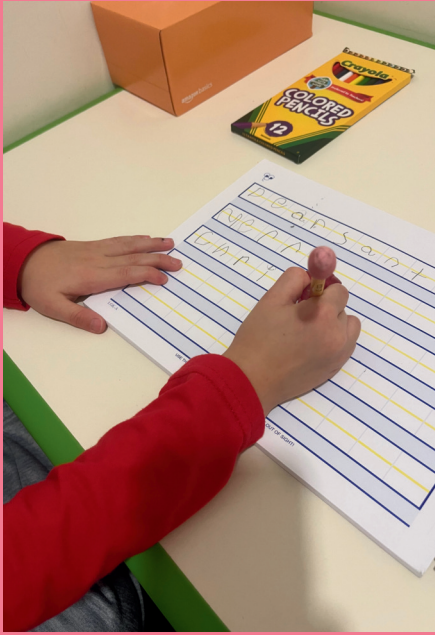
These children have a "leaky" sensory cup. Information goes in, but the brain doesn't always register it. They are often described as "mellow" or "daydreamers."

- **The Signs:** They might not notice if their shirt is on backward, they have a high pain tolerance, or they don't respond when their name is called (even though their hearing is fine).
- **The Shared Goal:** Both OTs and SLPs work to "wake up" the nervous system for these kids.
- **The Home Win:** Use high-contrast visuals and "sensory snacks" (like a cold drink or a crunchy pretzel) to help them alert to their surroundings before starting an activity.

When we look at behavior through a sensory lens, frustration turns into empathy.

- The "**Human Pogo Stick**" isn't trying to be "naughty" or "hyper"—they are trying to find their center.
- The "**Texture Detective**" isn't being "picky"—they are protecting themselves from a world that feels too loud and sharp.

By identifying these traits early, you can work with Occupational and Speech therapists to build a "Sensory Diet" that helps your child feel safe, focused, and ready to take on the world.



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NEXT STEPS

Is your child struggling with:

- Difficulty being understood?
(Articulation/Speech)
- Meltdowns or over-reactions to
clothes, noise, or touch? (Sensory)
- Frustration with handwriting or fine
motor tasks? (Fine Motor/OT)
- Attention

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