SENSORY INTEGRATION DYSFUNCTION: WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT? (PART II)

Kathleen Trumbull

(In our last issue, I described what sensory integration [SI] is. In this issue I explain reasons for pursuing further evaluation.)

From time to time, we all experience some problems processing sensations. However, when the brain is so disorganized that a person has difficulty functioning in daily life, that person is diagnosed as having Sensory Integration, or SI, Dysfunction. First identified decades ago by A. Jean Ayres, Ph.D., an occupational therapist, SI Dysfunction has only recently become widely recognized among the medical community. As we learn more and more about the mechanics of the brain, we finally understand why some children are “out-of-sync” and that we can do something to help. Ordinarily, growing older means that a child builds upon skills already acquired. For the “out-of-sync” child, however, the basic foundation for efficiently organizing sensory information isn’t solid enough. These children need help in learning how to perform purposeful activities. Occupational therapists are health and educational professionals who can help a child improve the functioning of their nervous system. If a parent or teacher is uncertain about pursuing evaluation and diagnosis, consider the following criteria:

- Does the problem get in the child’s way as s/he struggles with “doing what comes naturally” such as playing, listening or hugging? Or, is it negatively affecting her/his self-esteem?
- Does the child’s problem get in other people’s way because the problems are causing behaviors that bother those around her/him?
- Have others such as relatives, teachers, pediatricians or friends suggest that parents seek help?

These are three valid reasons to get additional assistance.

NAVajo Nationwide Special Education Seminar for Principals and Administrators

Watch for more information from your education line office in 2004.

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Information for this article was adapted from Carol Stock Kranowitz’s book, The Out-of-Sync Child, which is available at LINC, the CDD Resource Center: (505) 272-0281 or 1 (800) 827-6380 or http://cdd.unm.edu/linc/index.htm

NAVAJO Nation Assistive Technology Resources for You

The Navajo Nation Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services strongly promotes the use of assistive and adaptive technologies and manages a growing network of assistive technology loan banks to support individuals with disabilities living on or near the Navajo Nation. Established through formal Memoranda of Agreements three years ago through a federal grant awarded to New Mexico’s Technology Assistance Program, the Navajo Assistive Bank of Loan Equipment (ABLE) offers adaptive devices and services primarily to support students who have active Individualized Educational Plans in place, but also to enhance independence and improve function for Navajo individuals of all ages. The loan banks are located in Gallup at Disability Services, Inc.; in Tuba City, AZ at Project ASSIST! to Independence; in Ft. Defiance, AZ, at the Window Rock Unified School District; in St. Michaels, AZ, at the St. Michaels Association of Special Education; and in Santa Fe, NM, at the Special Programs Office of the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The Kayenta Unified School District (AZ) is in the process of joining the Consortium, as is the Indian Children’s Program at the UNM Center for Development and Disability in Albuquerque. For further information or to contact loan bank representatives directly, please call Marilyn Freeland, Assistive Technology Coordinator, Navajo Nation Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, Window Rock, AZ (928) 871-7935 or send email to: mfreeland@navajo.org
interest in creating educational environments, curriculum and abilities. Applications for educational settings are great and or no extra cost. Universal design benefits people of all ages and environment more usable by as many people as possible at little making products, communications, curriculum, and the built environment more usable by all people. Universal design is the design of greatest extent for creating a world we can all use. Educationally, if teaching, learning, and assessment, drawing on new brain research and new media technologies to respond to individual needs and abilities. Applications for educational settings are great and in creating educational environments, curriculum and teaching strategies which can be accessed by is growing rapidly.

Almost anyone.

People with disabilities;

Adults who are getting older;

Students who leave their glasses at home;

Alumni who need to operate electronic equipment or other devices with limited mobility or skill;

Students who need to operate electronic equipment or other devices with limited mobility or skill;

Students who leave their glasses at home;

Adults who are getting older;

People with disabilities;

Almost anyone.

Universal Design has become increasingly utilized by those designing curriculum for all children. By thinking proactively as to how lessons, use of technology, and the environment might be planned as to provide access by all. one has a ready-made approach to inclusive education. Are there a variety of teaching strategies? Are materials accessible? Will there be variations in lessons and activities which include all learners? How will learning be tailored to a range of abilities and needs?

Information here was developed from a variety of sources including the following websites: http://www.development.ncsu.edu/ced/ (The Center for Universal Design) http://www.tracecenter.org/world/gen_ud.html (Trace Center) http://www.cast.org/udl/ (CAST Universal Design for Learning)