

Beyond the Senses: Creating a Multi-Sensory Board for Pediatric Occupational Therapy

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ABSTRACT

A sensory board is a versatile therapeutic tool that can be used to target a number of different goals and can help patients beyond only dysregulation of sensory processes. This tool can also be used to assess patients' sensory abilities, tailor activities to individual patient's needs, as well as offer visible tools for goal and progress tracking. Research has found that sensory integration therapy resulted in a significant improvement in gross and fine motor skills in children with autism (Amel, 2015). The sensory board at OT Connection, a progressive pediatric therapy clinic in Pflugerville, Texas previously did not receive frequent use but had great potential to aid in adequate progress for patients with autism and sensory processing disorder, as well as benefit any child with any diagnosis in occupational therapy. **PURPOSE:** To improve the sensory board to provide pediatric occupational therapy clients with an alternative therapeutic tool to improve skills, including but not limited to, fine motor development, independence in self-care, dexterity skills, grasping positions, and hand eye coordination. **METHODS:** Occupational Therapists at OT Connection in Pflugerville, were interviewed to provide guidance on the type of activities they would find beneficial to include on the board. Upon completion, occupational therapists were provided access to use the updated board for six weeks with pediatric clients. The occupational therapists were then emailed and asked to complete a Google Form consisting of nine open-ended questions regarding the frequency of their use and the success of the board. **RESULTS:** Each occupational therapist ($n= 5$) reported an increase in the use of the sensory board in patients with Sensory Processing Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, as well as patients with other diagnoses. **CONCLUSION:** Overall, the revision to the sensory board resulted in an increase in use by occupational therapists as well as a noted increase in client engagement when performing tasks or skills. The occupational therapists at OT Connection plan to continue to use the board in the future.