

## COMMUNICATION AND REGULATION

When supporting our children's regulation, we can start with understanding and managing sensory input.

**Regulation-Communication Cycle:** Sensory regulation impacts how well someone can communicate. When sensory needs aren't met, it can make communication harder and affect emotional and behavioral responses.

### Communication Strategies:

- **Use visual supports** (like schedules or timers) to help with transitions and communication.
- **Use sensory breaks or tools** (e.g., fidget toys, music) to maintain calm and reduce stress.

**Checking for Sensory Processing Needs:** Regularly check if sensory needs are being met. Understanding a person's sensory profile (over-responsive, under-responsive, sensory-seeking, or avoiding) helps prevent communication breakdowns, especially during transitions or stressful times.



[Sensory Processing Checklist](#)

*Changes or transitions can cause sensory overload, resulting in shutdowns or emotional outbursts.*

## SENSORY MODULATION CHALLENGES

**Over-responsive:** Overwhelmed by sensory input.

**Under-responsive:** Does not react enough to sensory input.

**Sensory-seeking:** Actively seeks out intense sensory experiences.

**Avoiding:** Avoids sensory input, leading to discomfort and distress.

## MANAGING BEHAVIOURS

### Create a calm and safe place for sensory regulation that includes:

- Reduce sensory input: no talking, lights off (if bothers), etc.
- No demands on their behaviour in the calming space

### Use behaviour detective skills:

- Try to understand the causes behind the challenging behaviour and what sensory need they are trying to meet
- Test out our ideas by providing alternative sensory options (e.g., reducing sensory input, alternative activities)

**Foster co-regulation** by understanding the cause of the behaviour and making empathic statements

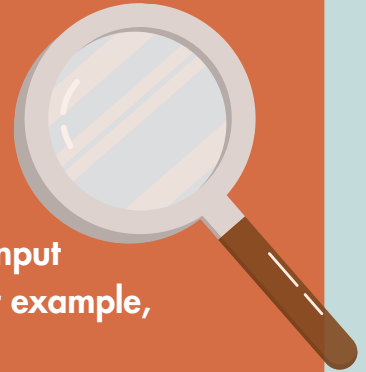
## REACTIVE VS PROACTIVE PLANS

- **Reactive Behaviour Plans:** Focus on consequences after behaviors occur, often missing the underlying sensory needs (e.g., avoidance vs. sensory sensitivity).
- **Proactive Behaviour Plans:** Aim to prevent behaviors by addressing sensory needs in advance. Use strategies like sensory diets, visual schedules, and anticipating triggers to support regulation and skill-building.

## BEING A SENSORY DETECTIVE

Anticipate stressors and establish a plan. For example, add to the routine

- Music
- Fidget toy
- Walk



Provide sensory input opportunities. For example,

- Heavy lifting
- Deep pressure

## Altering Activities

- Crunching dry cereal, popcorn, crackers, carrots, celery, apples
- Showers
- Jumping up and down on a mattress, mini-trampoline or inner tube
- Use bright lighting where the child plays
- Swinging
- Strong odors or tastes
- Movement (generally)

## Calming Activities

- Sucking hard candies, pacifiers, popsicles
- Pushing against walls with hands, shoulders, back, buttocks, and head
- Rocking, swaying or swinging slowly back and forth
- Cuddling or back rubbing
- Massage firmly and slowly with lotion
- Provide a "quiet corner" in the play area
- Low-level lighting
- Roll up in a blanket and rock
- Lycra clothing