

## SEND newsletter

Issue 2, February  
2024

Welcome back to our second issue of the Lanterns SEND newsletter. Apologies it has taken so long to get this out to you it has been a busy couple of months! We hope to get these out more regularly and it would be fantastic to hear your feedback and anything else you would like to see in future issues please email Ellie at [e.jennings@lanterns.hants.sch.uk](mailto:e.jennings@lanterns.hants.sch.uk)

**The coke bottle effect!** Has your child ever got home from school and appeared to just unravel and spill out all their emotions? Does your child ever come home from school after having a seemingly great day according to their teachers and erupt at the seemingly smallest thing? We call this the coke bottle effect.

Picture your child as a coke bottle (strange I know but bare-with!) Each time something stressful or unpleasant happens for the child they are shaken a little. This is applicable for any child (and us as adults may I add!!), but our children with SEND may have more of these moments as they may be having difficulties expressing their wants and needs or following adult led directions.

The pressure builds and builds and then once home with their parents, in their safe space with their safe people, the lid comes off the bottle and your child may explode with emotion. This can often seem out of the blue and not make any sense in the moment but by unpicking what may have happened throughout the day sometimes we can start to unpick why they may have exploded like that!



**Top tip: stay calm, give them space if that is what they need, support them to regulate before unpicking the causes.**



**Parent Wellbeing quote:**

*“The way we talk to our children becomes their inner voice”*

## Sensory processing differences

This issue is going to explore Sensory processing differences, what this means and practical things you can be doing. We are not qualified occupational therapists but a lot of our knowledge is informed by our close relationship with the therapy services and our years of experience.

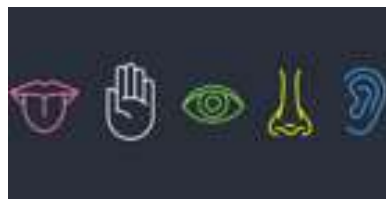
### So what do we mean when we say sensory processing differences?

*It is when the complex system that processes sensations in our body automatically, and regulates the information to produce an appropriate response does not work efficiently.*

As humans we all process sensory information in our own ways. The majority of us are able to process and manage sensory information on a day to day basis and although we may dislike certain things like a smell of a food, a high pitched sound or being squeezed, we can cope with these and do things to make this more bearable on a day to day basis.

For some individuals with sensory processing differences everyday sensory information may be harder. They may be **over-responsive** or **under-responsive** to any of their senses. These sensory differences may affect the way they think, feel and behave. This can have a profound effect on their life and it can be really distressing for the individual.

Sometimes a person with sensory processing differences may display a challenging behaviour which may not seem linked to their reaction to receiving some sensory information. However often the behaviour could be a response to the sensory information and the child through this behaviour is communicating their discomfort.



**Scenario: Max has sensory processing differences, he is over-responsive to sudden loud noises. He is playing in the playground and a loud lorry clunks past on the main road. The majority of the children do not even notice the lorry, a couple may notice it but the noise does not affect them but Max is feeling really overstimulated and dysregulated. 5 minutes later a child runs close to Max and he pushes them over. By identifying that the trigger for Max's behaviour was the noise that had happened earlier we can see that he had not yet been able to self-regulate and he was still feeling heightened by the lorry. This is linked to our coke can theory on the first page of this issue!**

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### How may sensory processing differences look for my child?

Each and every child is different and their sensory processing differences will be unique to them. We will not be able to cover each and every sensory processing difference, if you have concerns that your child may have some sensory processing difficulties, speak to your child's key person or Helen and Ellie to discuss this.

#### Over-responsive

Individuals who are over-responsive to sensory information may avoid certain sensory input, they may appear hypersensitive to certain sounds, smells and sights etc.



#### Under-responsive

A child who is under-responsive to sensory information may have low levels of arousal and make seek out sensory input and/or they may have poor registration of sensory information and may seem to not notice things happening.



### How can I manage my child's sensory processing differences?

Again we look at each child as an individual and it would be impossible to give one strategy to meet all sensory needs. The most important thing to remember is that a child communicating a sensory need is not being 'naughty' their body is telling them that this is what it needs. *E.g. a child biting everything may be a part of their sensory processing differences, they could be communicating that they are needing sensory feedback orally.* Instead of constantly taking things out of their mouth we would be identifying that this is a **sensory need** for them and offering them a safer alternative, we call this **redirecting**.

#### What are sensory needs?

Sensory needs are a term we use to describe something a child may be craving e.g. a sensory need for crashing into things or a sensory need for rocking or flapping their hands. A sensory need for climbing and being up high.

## Lanterns Nursery School

### What is redirecting?

Redirecting is when we acknowledge that a child's behaviour may be a sensory need and offer them a safer or more appropriate alternative to less desirable methods of receiving the sensory feedback they are seeking.

**Scenario:** Bella has a sensory need to push things, she would do this when she was seemingly calm so on the outside it did not always make sense why she was displaying this behaviour. Staff realised that Bella's sensory processing differences were under-responsive to information around touch and she was craving the sensory feedback she got when she pushed people and objects. Staff identified that this was not safe however Bella also has a sensory need and her bottling this up would cause her discomfort and may cause her to explode on a bigger scale later on (Another example of the coke bottle effect!). To support Bella's sensory processing needs but to also ensure that her behaviours were safe, staff found some activities that gave Bella a similar sensory feedback that were safe for her to do in the classroom such as rolling on a peanut ball using her upper body, doing exercises when she first came in such as pushing against the wall with her hands or throwing some balls in the garden.



Please do reach out to staff if you would like some more information or would like to ask more questions about your child's sensory needs!

**SOS:** Does your pre-school child struggle with social situations, social communication or Autism? Come and join us at Lanterns Nursery for the opportunity to meet other parents and professionals and explore strategies which may help. This group is run by Leanne Burton (TOP worker) and Ellie Jennings (Assistant SENCO).

### Dates for this year:

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 1pm

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 1pm

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June 9am

Please email [l.burton@lanterns.hants.sch.uk](mailto:l.burton@lanterns.hants.sch.uk)

If you would like to feedback on how you found this newsletter or if there is anything else you would like to see in future issues please email Ellie at [e.jennings@lanterns.hants.sch.uk](mailto:e.jennings@lanterns.hants.sch.uk)

St Francis Church  
you're welcome here

## FOOTPRINTS

A new play and support group for children under 5  
with additional needs and their parents/carers

Starting weekly on Tuesdays from 9th January '24

Time: 10.30am-12pm

At: St Francis Church, Valley Park, SO53 4ST

Toys, songs, stories, craft, coffee, cake and chat!