

Understanding Sensory Integration

Supporting Your Child's Development

What is Sensory Integration?

Sensory integration is the brain's ability to organize and make sense of information from the senses. It helps children respond appropriately to the world around them—whether it's balancing on a swing, listening to instructions, or eating a new food.

When sensory integration is working well, children are calm, attentive, coordinated, and able to learn new skills. But for some children, this process is more difficult. They may become overwhelmed by sounds, avoid messy play, struggle with coordination, or have trouble sitting still and focusing. These challenges can impact daily life, from getting dressed to participating in school and social activities.

Why Sensory Integration Matters for Skill Development

Sensory integration lays the foundation for many important skills, including:

- Gross and fine motor skills (e.g., jumping, handwriting)
- Self-regulation (e.g., managing emotions, attention)
- Body awareness and balance
- Feeding and eating habits
- Social interaction and play

Supporting a child's sensory needs helps them feel more comfortable in their body and surroundings, making it easier to learn and participate in everyday tasks.

How Therapy Can Help

Occupational Therapists trained in Ayres Sensory Integration® (ASI) work with children in a play-based, sensory-rich environment. They use specialised equipment such as swings, balance beams, and tactile materials to help children explore and respond to sensory input in a way that promotes growth and learning. Therapy is tailored to each child's unique needs and goals.

At the Sensory Integration Therapy Centre (SITC), we also involve parents in the process—offering strategies, home programs, and support to ensure your child's progress continues beyond the therapy room.

What Parents Can Do at Home

- Observe your child: Notice what types of activities calm them or trigger strong reactions.
- Create routines: Predictability helps children feel safe and in control.
- Encourage movement and play: Climbing, jumping, swinging, and messy play help develop sensory and motor skills.
- Limit overwhelm: Provide quiet spaces and reduce sensory overload when needed.

- Work with professionals: Collaborate with therapists to understand your child's profile and tailor support strategies at home.

Remember

Every child processes sensory information differently. With the right support, children can learn to manage their sensory world more effectively, building the skills they need to thrive at home, in school, and in life.