

THE SENSORY DIET

NUTRITION FOR YOUR BODY AND BRAIN



Karen O'Connor

**Consultant Speech &
Language Therapist**

**HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD
TO TRANSITION BETTER**

CONTENTS

Problems and Goals	3
Step 1 - Starting the Day	4
Step 2 - Throughout the Day	4
Step 3 - Ending the Day	6



PROBLEMS AND GOALS

PROBLEMS

My child...

- Can't seem to get himself and his things organised
- Becomes 'stressed out' while getting ready for school
- Becomes irritable during transition times
- Does not want to stop what he is doing when it's time to go home
- Does not like going to bed

GOALS

- Learn how to integrate sensory strategies into your child's daily transitions and routines at home and school.

Transitions are as important as the activities themselves. As Betty Snow, RN and SI movement specialist, would often say, "the silence between the notes also creates the music".

- Discover how sensory **tools** can be used to support transitions.



SOLUTIONS

STEP 1 Starting the Day

Make a schedule with your child. Being rushed or stressed can put a child's sensory system on alert and overload. Some children need more time in the morning.

- As a parent, you may need to allow plenty of time to start your day without rushing, even if it means getting up earlier.
- Discuss how much time is needed for each task such as: "it takes 10 minutes to eat, 6 minutes to dress, etc."
- Prepare things the night before such as organising backpacks, laying out clothes, planning breakfast.
- Use music and songs to sequence activities such as dressing.
- Be consistent with your schedule. A visual or auditory timer may be helpful.



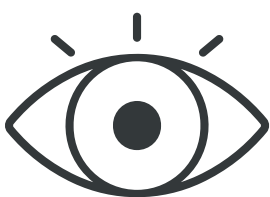
STEP 2 Throughout the day, at home, with friends and at school

- Collaborate with family, friends and school. Encourage your family and your child's teacher to discuss daily plans with your child.
- Explore ways they can make sure your child knows what is going to be next. Discuss which sensory tools they can use.

Explore the 7 categories and see what works for them in their specific environments to help your child.



HEARING



SEEING



TOUCHING



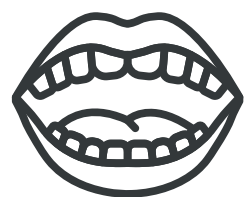
MOVING



SMELLING



MUSCLES



MOUTH

TIPS & IDEAS



HEARING

Listening to Baroque music can capture attention, calm and help focus your child when getting ready for school.



SEEING

Using a virtual chart with step by step activities sequenced in order can assist in getting ready to follow daily routines.



MOVING

Bouncing on a chair ball holding onto its small feet, from the kitchen to the homework space, can help your child get ready for work.



MUSCLES

Marching to rhythmical music with a steady beat can assist in getting ready for transitioning from outside to indoor activities.



SMELLING

Having a scented lamp with your child's favourite calming smell can help your child slow down when getting ready for bed.



MOUTH

Crunching on carrot sticks or popcorn can help your child focus when getting ready for (and during) homework time.



TOUCHING

Wearing a weighted vest intermittently (approximately 15 minutes on and 20 minutes off, especially if your child is not moving his centre of gravity) provides maintained firm pressure touch. This can assist in calming and organising when getting ready to go into a group situation.

BE CREATIVE AND HAVE FUN!



SOLUTIONS

STEP 3 Ending the day

Many things can make bedtime more difficult, including...

- Unexpected touch sensations like tickling or taking a shower. These types of activities can 'wake up' the senses when the goal is to calm down and go to sleep
- Too much visual or auditory stimulation such as TV or video games prior to bedtime
- Not enough time to prepare for bed. Remember, routines often help with transitions
- Scratchy or rough bedding. These types of textures can be irritating and alerting to sensitive skin



Tips for bedtime include...

- A warm bath (not too hot though!)
- A five minute body rub-down in a large terry cloth towel and/or with unscented lotion. Be sure to use slow rhythmic downward strokes in the direction the hair grows.
- Calming scents such as vanilla or lavender (ask your aroma therapist for suggestions)
- A soft, snuggly blanket
- Many pillows or a body pillow
- A sleeping bag which can retain the body's heat, inducing a calming sensation from the neutral warmth
- Quiet rhythmic music or background sounds such as a fan
- Snuggling with a bedtime story, especially poetry with strong rhythm and rhyme.

A NEW WAY OF LEARNING AND THINKING

