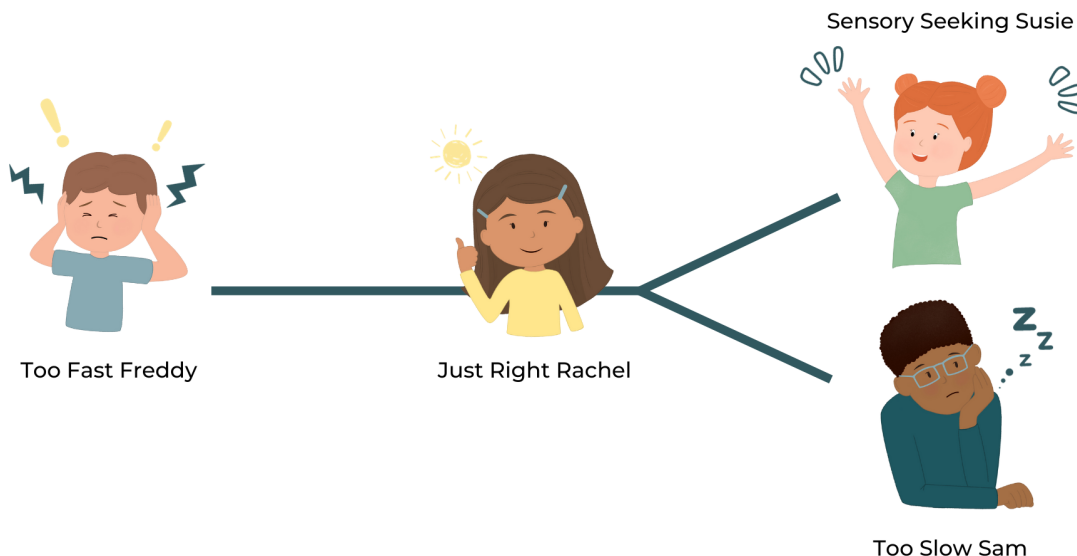


Create a Sensory Diet with BrainWorks!

- Children with Sensory Modulation Disorder (SMD), a subtype of Sensory Processing Disorder, struggle to determine which forms of sensory input are currently most important and respond appropriately to the intensity of the input.
- Because of this, they often have difficulty with attention to tasks or overstimulation. In this handout you learn about sensory diets and how to use BrainWorks to create and use one efficiently!





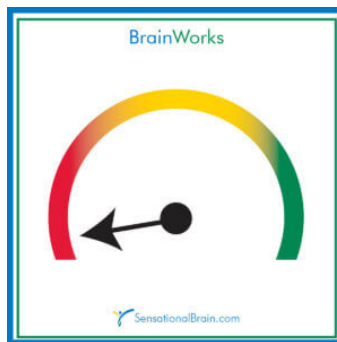
Create a Sensory Diet with BrainWorks!

- Intervention for SMD often involves occupational therapy services as school, in a clinic, or at home. Many occupational therapists recommend sensory diets to meet children's sensory needs in their homes and school environments. Sensory diet refers to the sensory input received by one's nervous system each day. Many kids with SMD benefit from a structured yet flexible sensory diet to intentionally manage their sensory needs throughout the day. BrainWorks simplifies the process of creating and implementing sensory diets!
- BrainWorks helps children learn self-modulation by
- Determining their sensory needs using the BrainWorks Tachometer and selecting appropriate activities facilitated by our arrow system.
- Note: BrainWorks is most effectively used under the guidance of an Occupational Therapist or another professional who has been trained in assessing and treating sensory processing disorders in children.



The BrainWorks Tachometer

The colors on the tachometer correlate with the colors on a stop light. Keep the tachometer nearby and refer to it frequently during the learning phase. Point out the child's behavior and the color on the tachometer that represents the behavior.



Red Zone

Red means Stop! When our brains and bodies are stopped, we may be feeling sluggish, sleepy, unmotivated, or sedentary. Use terms appropriate for the child's age and developmental level. If you are familiar with the Alert Program for Self-Regulation, you may use the engine analogy. For younger kids, you use Pooh characters as an analogy, with Eeyore being the character on red. Green activities are needed to rev up his engine. This is 'Too Slow Sam' in our continuum.



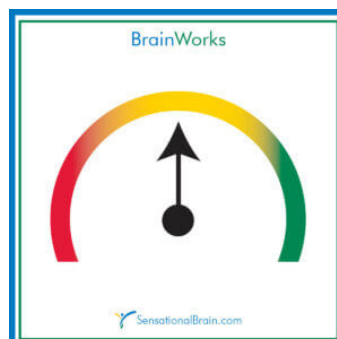
The BrainWorks Tachometer

Green Zone

Green means Go! When our brains and bodies are on Go! we are moving quickly, our engines are going fast, and we are much more like Tigger than anyone else in Pooh-land. Green isn't always happy and fun though. If we are going too fast, we can lose control. At this speed, a child might be agitated, irritable, hyper, unfocused, or fidgety. They may find it hard to think clearly or focus appropriately. This is 'Sensory Seeking Susie.'

Yellow Zone

Yellow means Just Right! When our brains and bodies are on yellow, we are alert and able to focus, not going too fast nor too slow. For younger kids, Winnie the Pooh is usually Just Right. Typically, no extra sensory activities are needed when a child is operating in this zone, but yellow arrow activities may help to maintain this level of alertness. This is also 'Just Right Rachel.'





Create a Sensory Diet with BrainWorks!

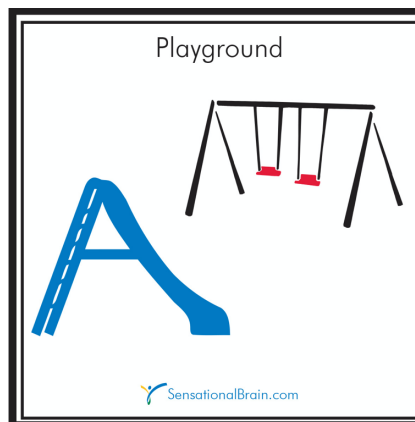
- Over-responders are functioning in the green zone when the sensory environment is too over-stimulating for them. The lights may be too bright, the noise level might be too high, or the visual stimuli might be too much for them to process effectively.
- Over-responders need red arrow activities to slow down their sensory engines during these times.
- Sensory cravers are functioning in the green zone when they are trying to get to the extremely high level of sensory input they need for their brains to be satisfied.
- Although our instincts tell us we need to help the child calm down, the best way to achieve the calm is by providing the high-intensity green arrow activities.
- Once that level of intensity is reached, the result will be a calmer state (yellow zone). So even though their sensory engine is already on green, they should still be encouraged to choose green arrow activities.



Create a Sensory Diet with BrainWorks!

If you are a parent and are uncertain whether your child's behaviors are a result of over- or under-responsivity, consult with an occupational therapist or fill out the Sensory Symptoms Checklist for insight. This checklist is free to download in our Resources section!

Note: The information in this section correlates with our BrainWorks Original program. If you need greater flexibility using the BrainWorks activity cards with other program, such as Zones of Regulation, please see options using BrainWorks-You-Way, which utilizes black bordered cards without arrows.





The BrainWorks Arrow System

Green Arrow Activities

These are best for under-responders and sensory cravers. These will be alerting for most kids and will help them reach the necessary threshold level for input to be meaningful for their brains.

Examples:

- Spinning activities alert the nervous system and help to either wake under-responders up (mentally or physically) or to help sensory cravers reach a high threshold before seat work.
- Dancing and other forms of movement that involve frequent head position changes are also alerting to the nervous system because of the stimulation to the vestibular system. This stimulation provides information about where we are in relationship to gravity.





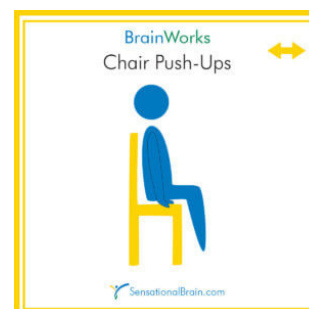
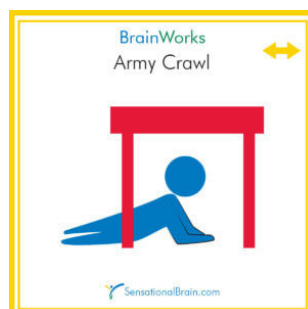
The BrainWorks Arrow System

Yellow Arrow Activities

These activities encourage focus and attention. They are just right activities and tend to bring both over- and under-responders to an appropriate level of arousal for learning and productivity.

Examples:

- Activities such as army crawling provide a lot of proprioceptive (deep pressure) input to the joints. These types of activities help with body awareness and generally have an organizing effect on the nervous system.
- Chair push-ups are one way to get proprioceptive (deep pressure) input to the joints while seated. This is also a great strategy for a quick brain break!





The BrainWorks Arrow System

Red Arrow Activities

These help a child slow down or calm down. For over-responders, these activities help them modulate their sensory input more effectively and feel less overwhelmed.

Examples:

- Use a box or bin just large enough for the child to squeeze into. Flexion positions have an overall calming effect. Combine with the deep pressure input by adding pillows or blankets to the box. This can serve as an inexpensive calming tool.
- A hand massage provides calming deep pressure input and has the added benefit of human touch (depending on context and relationship.)

