

## WHAT IS SENSORY PROCESSING

Sensory processing is how our brains receive, organize and understand information from the environment (or sensory input). It is how we become aware of what is going on both around our body (e.g., from what we see and hear) and from within our body (e.g., from touch, joint receptors). In order for individuals to be able to carry out the activities they need to during the day, their sensory systems need to work together.

In the image on the back of this page you will see a Sensory Pyramid. At the very bottom of the pyramid is the *Central Nervous System* (CNS), which is the brain. That is where all of the information is processed. The next level is where the *sensory systems* are located: olfactory (smell); visual (sight); auditory (sound); gustatory (taste); tactile (touch); vestibular (head position); proprioception (body awareness). The higher up in the pyramid you go, the higher level those skills are, with learning to be the highest skill in the pyramid.

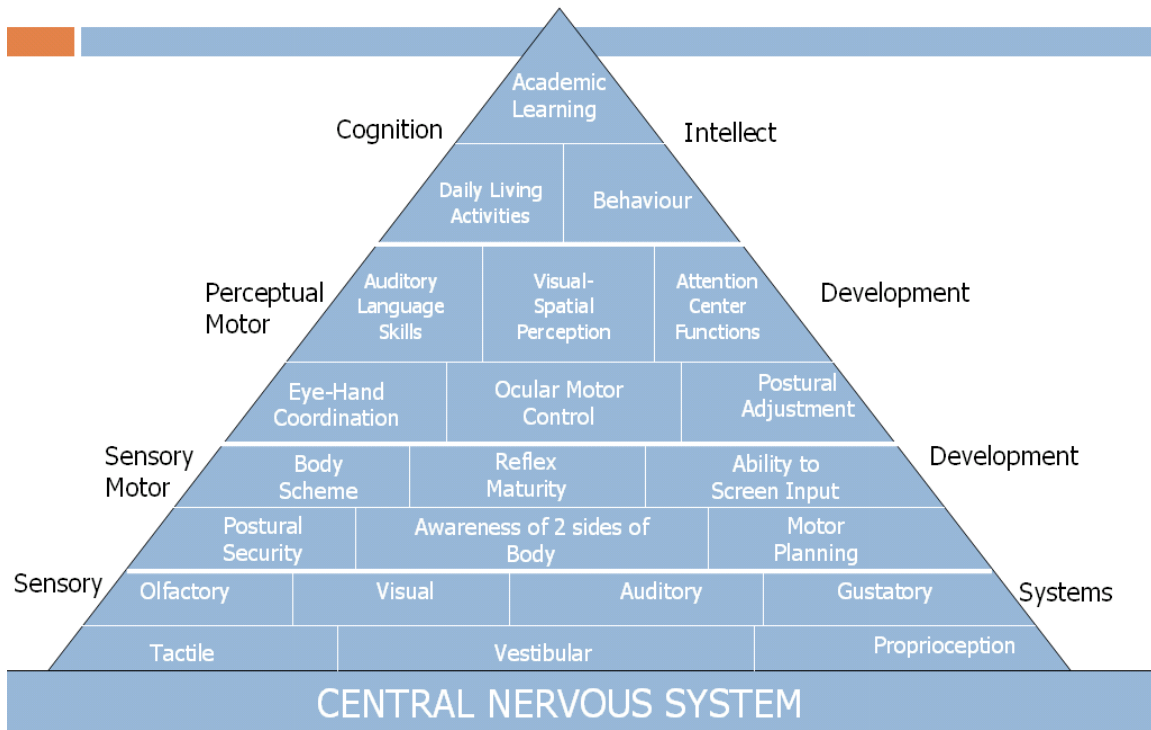
The important message is that you need to build from the bottom up; if the base isn't strong, organized, and completely built, you can't build on it and the top will fall over. For example, if an individual has difficulty with body awareness, they are not going to be able to distinguish their right hand from their left, or have eye-hand coordination, pay attention in class, or become toilet trained.

We will work together to determine which sensory-based strategies will help your child organize the bottom of their pyramid. By making sure your child receives the right amount of sensory input, it will allow them to be better able to participate in their activities of daily living (playing, learning, eating, dressing, etc.).

If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Occupational Therapist.



# Sensory Pyramid



Yack, E., Aquilla, P., & Sutton, S. (2002). *Building Bridges Through Sensory Integration: Therapy for Children with Autism and Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders*. Sensory Resources: Las Vegas, Nevada.