

Sensational OT Tip of the Month

Lunch Room

Do you know children that ...?

1. Spend little time actually eating in the lunch room
2. Have increased behavior challenges in the cafeteria
3. Drop their tray or frequently spill food and drinks

These children might have sensory and/or motor struggles. The lunch room is overwhelming for many children and adults. The sensory avoider may withdraw or act out due to the discomfort of noise, visual overload, and unexpected touch from lines or crowding. The sensory seeker can become so excited they have a hard time settling themselves. Carrying trays, opening cartons and containers presents a motor challenge for some children.

Sensational Ideas for the Lunch Room

1. Have a lunch club in a smaller or quieter area for children that can't handle the large lunch room. This is helpful for social skill development as well.
2. Have sound blocking headphones available for children that are bothered by noise.
3. Give visual cues for where each child is to sit or stand in line to prevent accidental pushing or crowding.
4. Provide heavy muscle work just before going into the lunch room to help children feel calm and organized as they enter. (wall pushups, stretches, etc.)
5. Select a lunch buddy to help with containers or encourage the child to pack lunch, using containers that they have practiced opening.

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