

Sensational Preschool/Schoolage OT Tip of the Month

Nose tools

Do you know children that ...

1. cover their nose to block out smells?
2. seem to avoid projects with smells like paint or clay?
3. become more active when there are different smells in the room?

These children might have olfactory (smell) sensitivity. The sense of smell can trigger strong emotional reactions, good and bad, as well as memories of past events. If you have children in your room that are sensitive to smells it is good to be aware of behavior changes that may relate to smells – cleaning products, food, perfume, art materials. Although you may barely notice the odor it can be very aversive or over stimulating to the child with olfactory sensitivity.

Sensational Ideas for Olfactory Sensitivity

1. Acknowledge that smells can bother some people.
2. Consider the smell of materials you use in the room and the possible effects on the children in your classroom.
3. Avoid wearing scented products such as lotions and body spray.
4. Provide a flavored snack, mint or gum to mask the smell when it cannot be avoided.
5. Smells can calm or alert. For most people, peppermint and citrus smells are alerting and vanilla, banana, and lavender tend to be more calming.

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