

Sensational Toddler/Preschool OT Tip of the Month Social Struggles

Do you know children that ...?

- seem to have difficulty making or sustaining friendships?
- do not know how to join into play with others?
- get overstimulated and/ or withdraw from groups of children?

These children might have sensory processing challenges that are impacting social interactions. They may ...

- get overwhelmed by sensory input when in groups making it hard to engage.
- get so overstimulated it is hard to control their actions.
- have poor motor coordination making it hard to play successfully during physical play.
- feel insecure because of negative past experiences.

Sensational Ideas for Social Success

1. Plan time for this child to work with one child successfully in an activity that is of interest to both.
2. Encourage play dates outside of school if there seems to be a good match for a child to promote friendships.
3. Let the parents know what games the other children commonly play so they can practice the needed skills at home to increase confidence.
4. Utilize literature and curriculum that build social thinking as part of learning for all the children in your class. We sometimes use the We Thinkers curriculum for 4-7 year olds from www.socialthinking.com
5. [Beyond Behavior Management](#) by Jenna Bilmes has helpful information on developing a child's sense of affiliation in the classroom as well as understanding sensory needs.

COTI provides added social opportunities during the summer. Go to www.cintiOTinstitute.com for information about the social opportunities at Camp Odakota and our Summer Sensations groups.

[Click here](#) for more tip sheets for preschool and school age classrooms at www.cintiOTinstitute.com/tipofthemonth . For information about occupational therapy services at COTI go to www.cintiOTinstitute.com. (Dostal, 2017)