

Sensational Toddler/Preschool OT Tip of the Month Ear Tools

Do you know children that ...?

1. Cover their ears or hide when the volume in the room increases?
2. Hum or make other sounds when working
3. Get more and more “revved up” in a loud environment?

These children might have auditory sensitivity. Some sounds actually hurt their ears. Sounds that are out of their control or sudden are most distressing. Some noise is so distracting or irritating they try to block it out. They may be on sensory overload from a combination of input – visual, auditory, etc. - leading to withdrawal or behavioral outbursts.

Sensational Ear Tools

1. Acknowledge that the sound is painful or stressful and come up with a plan to resolve the problem with the child. (Ex. Squeeze my hand when entering a noisy gross motor room)
2. Use sound blocking headphones when an alarm goes off or when in noisy environments such as an assembly or gross motor room.
3. For the child that hums or makes noises that bother others, allow the child to listen to soft music through headphones.
4. Find a quiet place for this child to give a break from the bombardment of input. Evaluate the value of the music or other background noise to the learning process during a specific activity. Minimize input when possible based on the need.

For more information refer to the book:

Sensory Integration: A Guide for Preschool Teachers by Christy Isbell and Rebecca Isbell.

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