

Schools Occupational Therapy Handbook



How to Use This Handbook

- These resources cater for children and young people of all ages and abilities who are experiencing challenges in a wide variety of areas.
- It is designed for use in schools, early years settings or those in other health and social care roles to support participation in strategies at home, in education settings and in the community.
- Occupational performance areas are colour coded for quick reference.
- Please seek further advice if you have any concerns around safety in implementing strategies
- Activities that promote skill acquisition and independence in everyday skills (e.g. writing, cutting, holding a pencil) should be carried out for at least 10 minutes three times per week, at home or school for one school term.
- Following application over one school term, outcomes for whole schools or individuals should be reviewed collaboratively between education staff, family, and any other health or social care professionals involved, where necessary.
- It is useful to keep a record or diary of all activities or strategies that have been undertaken, as this can be helpful for those wanting to seek further advice or make a referral.
- The schools OT handbook pages have been designed to provide quick reference for use in settings or to share with families where appropriate. Further information, education, links and resources can be found on the Just One Norfolk Website www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk and Professionals working in education, health and the local Authority can register for a professional account and build a personalised online library of resources and access information across a wide range of topics and developmental themes for children and young people of all ages.



Just One Norfolk Professional Logins

What are the Professional Logins?

The professional area is part of the Just One Norfolk website, hidden from the public, and accessed only through your professional login.

The area includes health topic resources based on the health and wellbeing needs of children in Norfolk, locality-level needs data for all professionals and school-level data for educational settings as well as an occupational therapy digital library. The area will continue to grow and develop.

Who are they for?

Professional logins are for all professionals working across Norfolk & Waveney.

The data and resources available will provide insight into priority health concerns within a specific locality or setting. Additionally, the health profiling tool will enable professionals to create and record action plans against identified health needs, prompting early intervention.

How do I register?

Go to <https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/> and click on 'Register' in the top right. Register and sign up for an account using your professional email address. You will need to validate your email address and this email may go to junk – so keep an eye out!

Once logged in, a secondary navigation bar will appear below the main Just One Norfolk navigation, giving you access to all the additional content.

Passcodes for schools to access school level data are sent automatically to school office inboxes. Once received you can select your school within your professional account and add the passcode. If you would like to find out more or haven't received your code yet, please get in touch by emailing: ccs.justonenorfolk@nhs.net

Welcome to the Schools Occupational Therapy Handbook

These Occupational Therapy (OT) tools and strategies have been designed and published by the Norfolk and Waveney Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service to provide advice, strategies and equipment ideas to support children to develop independence in everyday skills and to promote successful participation in school and home life.

This OT handbook is a resource for schools, early years staff and other health and social care professionals to support participation in home, community, schools, and early year settings.

The Schools Occupational Therapy handbook is split into the below colour coded occupational performance areas.

MAKING A REFERRAL	5
PERSONAL CARE	6
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LEARNING, PLAYING & EXPLORING	16
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Making a Referral

Accessing Service in Your Area

Children's Occupational Therapists work with children from birth to 18 (or 19 if attending special schools).

Occupational therapists aim to help children and young people achieve their full potential, in their ability to play, learn, look after themselves and carry out day-to-day activities, which can help improve their level of independence and quality of life.

They also support families and other carers, and work alongside other professionals such as teachers, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, nurses and paediatricians.

Occupational therapists will work in the most appropriate setting for the child, young person or their family/carers. This could be the home, a clinic, hospital, a respite or education setting.

Occupational therapists may be employed by health, social services or charities. Young people who are having occupational therapy when they turn eighteen, will have their OT needs transferred to an adult occupational therapy team. Please see the individual teams for information about how to access services in your area.

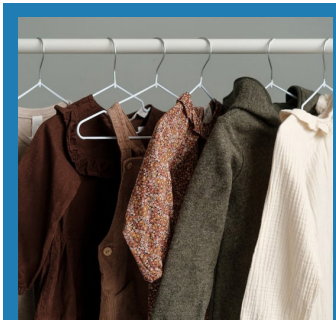
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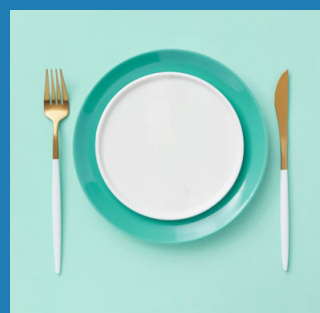
<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/making-a-referral/>

Personal Care

Occupational therapists aim to improve the skills needed for essential personal care tasks such as washing and dressing and learning new skills.



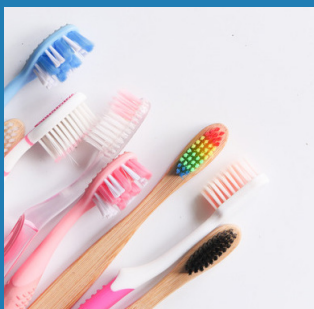
Clothing &
Dressing



Mealtime
Support



Toileting



Oral Care



Learning a
Skill



Organisational
Skills

Personal Care Clothing & Dressing

Children can become involved in dressing from a very early stage. Developing body awareness, recognising different articles of clothing e.g. shoes, hat and participating when others help them to get dressed are all skills that build independence.

As children get older, some aspects of dressing can be very challenging; e.g. tying laces, doing buttons, getting clothes the right way round etc. It also utilises many different skills, for example, dexterity, balance, movement planning, spatial organisation etc.

This page contains:

- Dressing skills for older children
- Tips for changing for PE
- Order of dressing
- Backward chaining
- Putting clothes on the right way round
- Putting and taking off a jacket
- Socks and shoes
- Developmental coordination disorder

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/personal-care/clothing-dressing/>

Personal Care

Mealtime Support

Some children struggle with the sensory aspects of certain food types and will avoid the food they find overwhelming. Sensory triggers can involve appearance (colour/ shape), texture, smell and taste. Selective eating is not always a problem. Everyone has preferences, the child may exclude specific food but still have a balanced diet.

Mealtimes are an important aspect of family life. Information can be found here on feeding, using cutlery and managing difficulties around eating for children and young people.

This page contains:

- Tips on how to increase exposure to food
- Encouraging exploration of food
- Preparation and choosing
- Using utensils
- Sensory in everyday life
- Sitting at the table
- Mealtime equipment
- Backward chaining
- Calmer eating strategies
- Mealtime Support
- Fine Motor Skills

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/personal-care/mealtime-support/>

Personal Care

Toileting

Independent toileting is one of the first and most important steps toward building independence. As a social and developmental milestone, it is quite unique as it relies upon a parent or carer to both instigate the training process and provide ongoing support.

Independent toileting involves 5 steps and is a complex skill to master. Celebrate small achievements and try not to focus on accidents as they are part of the process!

This page contains:

- Are they ready for the toilet?
- Communication difficulties
- Fear & sensory issues
- Toileting challenges
- Practical support

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/personal-care/toileting/>

Personal Care

Oral Care

Brushing teeth is an important part of our oral hygiene routine but for a child with sensory sensitivities, this task can be exceptionally difficult. If a child is over responsive to touch, this can result in them not tolerating anything in or around the mouth therefore issues around tooth brushing can occur.

It is recommended we give our children assistance when brushing their teeth until at least 6-7 years of age as they will not have developed the motor coordination skills required to brush appropriately.

This page contains:

- How professional settings can support teeth brushing
- Difficulties brushing teeth

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/health-topic-resources/healthy-lifestyles/oral-health/>

Personal Care

Learning a Skill

To learn new skills, children need to have the opportunity to repeat activities regularly, in a stress-free environment. Using strategies like backward chaining can also help a child acquire a skill.

Children learn best through play and fun experiences - this is especially true in the early years. Helping your child solve challenges that come up will help them grow their motor and problem-solving skills.

You can help your child build on these skills by giving them lots of chances to practice. Below are some of the skills your child will gain over their first few years and ideas of activities to do together. This will help to build and develop these skills by giving plenty of opportunities to practice them.

This page contains:

- How you can help your child develop their skills
- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills
- Problem solving
- Reading skills
- Backward chaining
- Sequencing
- Learning a motor task
- Motor skills framework

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/skills-building/learning-a-skill/>

Personal Care Organisational Skills

Organising ourselves is a skill many take for granted, but for some children this can be extremely challenging, causing frustration, confusion and could have an impact on self-esteem.

A child who struggles and does not get the right support, understanding or ability to put in place strategies to support skills may be impacted academically, have poor personal care, difficulties with peers, social isolation or behavioural difficulties.

Tasks such as organising your school bag to ensure you have everything ready for all your classes the next day, or remembering when to hand in your homework can be extremely challenging, but by recognising those difficulties, putting in strategies and structures can help a child keep on task and become more independent.

This page contains:

- How to recognise organisational difficulties
- What can help improve organisation?

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/skills-building/organisational-skills/>

Sleep

School-aged children need between 9 and 11 hours of sleep per night depending on their age. Not getting enough sleep is common in children and young people.

Sleep deprivation can be caused by any number of issues including; irregular routines, worries, screen use and late bedtimes.



Sleep Guidance
for Professionals



Sleep Guidance
for Families

Sleep

Sleep Guidance for Professionals

School-aged children need between 9 and 11 hours of sleep per night depending on their age. Not getting enough sleep is common in children and young people. Sleep deprivation can be caused by any number of issues including; irregular routines, worries, screen use and late bedtimes.

Teenagers have the added complication of a biological shift to go to sleep and wake later – which is at odds with the school day.

Not getting enough sleep affects children and young people's ability to think, handle stress, maintain healthy immune systems and regulate their emotions.

This page contains:

- Resources to help children with sleep
- How sleep effects school

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/health-topic-resources/healthy-lifestyles/sleep/>

Sleep

Sleep Guidance for Families

Getting enough sleep is important for our physical and mental wellbeing.

Getting the right amount of sleep will;

- Improve concentration and attention span
- Give the brain time to 'file' in your memory what it has learnt in the day
- Let the body rest and repair - this helps to keep the immune system ready to protect from illnesses
- Reduce stress hormones and is good for emotional and mental health
- Making sure children and young people get enough sleep helps them keep well, thrive and reach their potential

This page contains:

- Bedtime worries
- Bedtime routines
- Food & drink near bedtime
- The bedroom
- Teenagers
- Children & young people with additional needs

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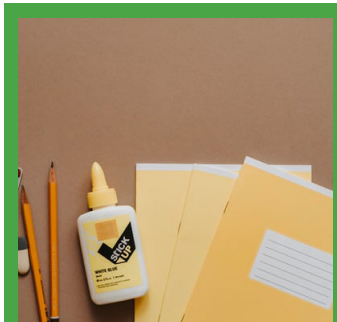
<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/child-development-additional-needs/behaviour-sleep/childrens-sleep/>

Learning, Playing & Exploring

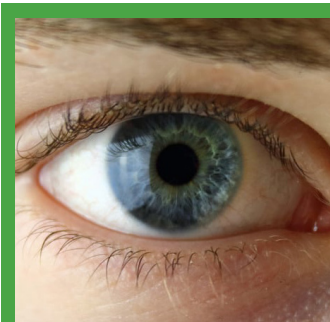
Children learn best through play and fun experiences - this is especially true in the early years. Helping a child solve challenges that come up will help them grow their motor and problem-solving skills.



In Schools & Settings



Skills Building



Understanding Visual Information

Learning, Playing & Exploring In Schools & Settings

Occupational therapy in the classroom is a collaborative effort between therapists, educators, and families to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that addresses the needs of all children and young people.

This approach recognises that every child is unique, with their own strengths and challenges, and focuses on building individualised plans that foster success in the classroom and beyond.



Calming Strategies



Exams & Revision



Devices For Students With SEND



OT in The Classroom



Posture & Seating

In Schools & Settings

Calming Strategies

Sensory calming activities provide sensory input and help to meet your child's sensory processing needs. They can help your child to become calm, self regulated and less fidgety. These sensory calming activities can also reduce your child's stress and anxiety. Children with sensory processing difficulties benefit from sensory calming activities when they are feeling restless, angry or frustrated. They may also be helpful to prevent meltdowns. You can try providing a choice of activities and your child may even be able to select the activity that he or she needs in order to self-regulate.

Below are some activities and movements that can help with calming.

This page contains:

- Calming sensory activities
- Sensory regulation
- Emotional regulation
- Understanding regulation

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/in-schools-settings/calming-strategies/>

In Schools & Settings

Exams & Revision

Exam support and special provision should be assessed early to apply for additional arrangements and to give your child a chance to learn how to use this extra provision.

Most children and young people have exams and assessments during their school years. It is normal for this to be a bit stressful. This will be more so for some children than others. Learning how to cope with pressure is an important skill.

Helping a child spot when they are feeling stressed, finding ways to cope, and to ask for help when they need it, is important. It will help them at exam time and in other challenges in life.

This page contains:

- Focus & attention activities
- Focus & attention movements
- Calming sensory activities
- Realistic goals
- Planning
- Self-care
- Results day

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/in-schools-settings/exams-revision/>

In Schools & Settings Devices for Students with SEND

Digital Assistive Technology (DAT) refers to equipment and devices that are electronic in nature (i.e. computers, tablets, iPads and all related software and apps) that can enable a student with a disability/additional needs to access a range of functional activities (communication, play, academic work, online learning resources, etc).

This page contains:

- When to introduce digital technology for student with SEND
- Most commonly used software

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/in-schools-settings/ipads-laptops-computers-for-students-with-send/>

In Schools & Settings

OT in the Classroom

Occupational therapy in the classroom is a collaborative effort between therapists, educators, and families to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that addresses the needs of all students.

This approach recognises that every child is unique, with their own strengths and challenges, and focuses on building individualised plans that foster success in the classroom and beyond.

Through this collaborative effort, occupational therapy can help students achieve their full potential and become successful, independent learners.

This page contains:

- Using hands for school and play
- Exercise putty
- Pre-writing
- Pencil grasp
- Letter formations
- Scissor skills

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/in-schools-settings/occupational-therapy-in-the-classroom/>

In Schools & Settings

Posture & Seating

When using our hands it is important to have good posture and positioning, particularly for activities that require coordination and concentration, such as feeding, playing and writing.

If a child has to concentrate on keeping stable or maintaining a comfortable position, they will be less able to concentrate on the task that they are doing. As a result, the child may miss instructions, fidget, appear restless and disruptive. The use of the hands will also be improved if the child has a good sitting posture.

This page contains:

- Seating
- Sitting on the carpet
- Alternative ways of completing classroom work

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/in-schools-settings/posture-seating/>

Learning, Playing & Exploring Skills Building

To learn new skills, children need to have the opportunity to repeat activities regularly, in a stress-free environment. Using strategies like backward chaining can also help a child acquire a skill.

Children learn best through play and fun experiences - this is especially true in the early years. Helping your child solve challenges that come up will help them grow their motor and problem-solving skills.

 <p>Fine Motor Skills</p>	 <p>Focus & Attention</p>	 <p>Gross Motor Skills</p>	 <p>Learning A Skill</p>
 <p>Memory</p>	 <p>Organisational Skills</p>	 <p>Play & Engagement</p>	

Skills Building

Fine Motor Skills

Occupational Therapists are frequently consulted by school staff to assess a child for their fine motor skills and can provide resources to build fine motor skills within the classroom.

Fine motor skills guide the small movements of the hand and fingers that allow a child to write and draw for example, or manipulate buttons, zips, or scissors. When these skills are under-developed, the results can include reduced independence, school performance and self-confidence.

This page contains:

- Fine Motor exercises
- Pencil grasp
- Cutlery
- Exercise putty
- Handwriting & letter formation
- Using hands for play & school
- Developing typing skills
- Scissor skills

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/skills-building/fine-motor-skills/>

Skills Building

Focus & Attention

Distractions can come in many forms. The child who is overly sensitive to sensory input may over respond to the slightest sounds, textures, sights, scents, tastes, or motions. Children who are excessively distracted by their sensory needs will struggle to attend to simple commands. Other children may be able to 'keep it together' in a classroom or home setting, yet their concentration is challenged.

Inattention can present as indifference, disregard, forgetfulness, carelessness, disinterest, neglect, or thoughtlessness. Children may make mistakes or seem like they aren't able to pay attention. When a child is struggling to complete tasks, there can be many reasons or signs of attention issues.

This page contains:

- Focus & attention activities
- Focus & attention movements
- Attention & listening
- Attention Autism
- Intensive interaction
- Objects of reference

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/skills-building/focus-attention/>

Skills Building

Gross Motor Skills

Gross motor skills refer to large movement patterns involving the whole body such as walking, running, jumping, and hopping. These skills develop from birth, e.g. rolling, crawling and become more complex e.g. swimming, bike riding and participating in sports. Effective gross motor skills are important for developing fine motor skills and underpin activities of daily living and all other activities.

Difficulties in this area might include; poor co-ordination, poor balance, difficulty with hand eye coordination tasks and movements that lack fluency.

A physiotherapy or Occupational Therapy referral may be needed if there are difficulties with gross motor skills.

This page contains:

- Developing gross motor skills
- Muscle tone
- Balance
- Proprioception
- Joint stability
- Motor planning
- Bilateral integration
- Developmental coordination disorder

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/skills-building/gross-motor-skills/>

Skills Building

Learning a Skill

To learn new skills, children need to have the opportunity to repeat activities regularly, in a stress-free environment. Using strategies like backward chaining can also help a child acquire a skill.

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- Reading skills
- Backward chaining
- Sequencing
- Learning a motor task
- Motor skills framework

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Skills Building

Memory

Brainwaves move at over 150mph. A brain receives information, sorts it and will disregard what it doesn't need. 70% of what we learn in a day is gone in 24 hours....unless you intend to remember it and practice it!

How we remember is strongly linked to our senses. For example, some people learn through their visual senses because they have strong connections to their visual memory. Remembering is improved when learning is multi-sensory, by seeing, doing, writing down, and listening.

This page contains:

- Tips to improve memory
- How to help someone remember verbal instructions

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/skills-building/memory/>

Skills Building Organisational Skills

Organising ourselves is a skill many take for granted but for some children this can be extremely challenging, causing frustration, and confusion and having a big impact on lowering self-esteem.

A child who struggles and does not get the support and understanding to practice and put in place strategies can lead to difficulties such as underperformance academically, poor personal care, difficulties with peers, frustrated parents/teachers, social isolation, behavioural difficulties

Tasks such as organising your school bag to ensure you have everything ready for all your classes the next day, or remembering when to hand in your homework can be extremely challenging but by recognizing those difficulties, putting in strategies and structures can help a child keep on task and become more independent.

This page contains:

- How to recognise organisational difficulties
- What can help improve organisation?

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/skills-building/organisational-skills/>

Skills Building Play & Engagement

Children and young people learn about the world through play. The benefits of playing are often overlooked, but they are there for any child to enjoy. Play is not always just a fun and silly activity. Research shows that it's also a critical tool in a child's physical, mental, emotional, and social development.

Occupational therapy and play provide a tremendous opportunity for helping children regain their independence and improve their quality of life.

This page contains:

- Benefits of play
- Types of play
- Play ideas
- Communication with toddlers
- Communication with pre schoolers
- Communication with young children

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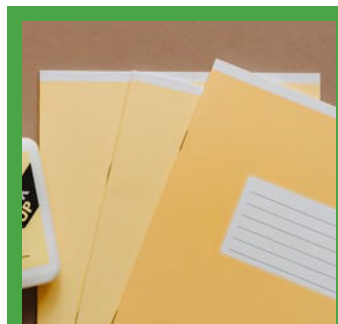


<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/skills-building/play-engagement/>

Learning, Playing & Exploring

Understanding Visual Information

Visual processing makes up several areas that combine what we see with what we do. It allows us to take in visual information, process it, and use it to complete motor actions. Most of the time, this collection of information and interpretation happens without us even realising it.



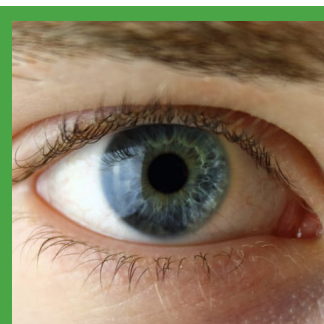
Visual Closure



Visual Discrimination



Visual Figure Ground



Visual Perception

Understanding Visual Information

Visual Closure

Visual Closure is the ability to visualise the whole of an object when part of it is hidden or missing. It allows accurate judgements to be made from familiar but partial information.

Visual Closure is a foundation skill for fluency and speed in reading and spelling. Efficient reading relies on visual closure because with each fixation of the eye only part of the letters of a word or phrase is actually perceived.

This page contains:

- Recognising children struggling with visual closure
- Activity ideas

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/understanding-visual-information/visual-closure/>

Understanding Visual Information

Visual Discrimination

Visual Discrimination is the ability to identify differences and similarities between shapes, symbols, objects and patterns by their dominant features. For example, recognising the difference between two similarly sized or shaped fruits such as an apple and pear.

It helps a student notice differences and similarities between objects, i.e. for matching. It helps us to quickly interpret visual information, i.e. recognising and reading a “b” and “d”.

This page contains:

- Recognising children struggling with visual discrimination
- Activity ideas

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/understanding-visual-information/visual-discrimination/>

Understanding Visual Information

Visual Figure Ground

Visual Figure Ground Perception is the ability to identify relevant information from a background that contains irrelevant or distracting objects and images.

For example finding a specific toy in a toy box, finding today's date on the teacher's board or finding your place in your workbook.

This page contains:

- Why is it important?
- Activity ideas

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/understanding-visual-information/visual-figure-ground/>

Understanding Visual Information

Visual Perception

Visual Perception is the ability to understand and interpret visual information. This skill is required in the classroom for looking at and copying information.

Understanding visual perception in the classroom

- Diagrams should be simplified and the most significant elements highlighted
- The drawing of maps and diagrams may be difficult, so it is often appropriate to have an outline for the child who then labels the appropriate features
- When reading, use a card with a cut away window to isolate two words, then gradually increase the size of the window, as the student is able to process more words
- Always complement written instructions with verbal. Encourage the student to 'talk back' instructions
- Use graph paper to help with the layout of maths problems. The student writes one number in each square

This page contains:

- Understanding visual perception in the classroom
- Copying
- Organising work
- Visual perception games

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/learning-playing-exploring/understanding-visual-information/visual-perception/>

Socialising & Relationships

Occupational Therapists are involved in the participation of occupational performance, for this to be successful it needs to incorporate social and emotional understanding. Children need to develop skills in relationships with others, manage conflict, balance social pressures, and behave with good judgement and within social expectations.



Social Skills



Supporting Social
Communication
Needs



Alternative
Communication
Strategies

Socialising & Relationships

Social Skills

Life can be particularly challenging for young children and children with social interaction difficulties in understanding social expectations and responding appropriately. Continued difficulties can lead to social isolation, conflict and reduced self-esteem.

To develop communication and interaction, children need to include verbal but also non-verbal cues, understanding their own and others body language, appearance, demeanour etc.

This page contains:

- Recognising children struggling with social skills
- Ideas to develop appropriate social interaction

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/socialising-relationships/social-skills/>

Socialising & Relationships

Supporting Children's Social Communication Needs

Social communication refers to the social use of language and the ability to use and interpret language and behaviour with others, in order to have successful communication.

Broadly speaking, social communication is the sending and receiving of messages through a combination of strategies.

This page contains:

- How to help & support young people
- Supporting learning in the classroom
- Understanding emotions & social situations
- Friendships
- Conversation starters
- Getting ready for learning

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<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/health-topic-resources/health-development/supporting-children-s-social-communication-needs/>

Socialising & Relationships

Alternative Communication Strategies

Some children are unable to rely on speech to communicate all of their needs and thoughts. These children will need to use additional strategies or communication aids to help them communicate with the world around them. Many children use a combination of methods in different situations depending on what suits them best. These resources can take many forms and may be used in different combinations, specific to each child.

There are low tech methods such as gesture, signing, symbols and communication books/boards. More high-tech methods include single message switches, computer-based systems and iPads.

For some children this will be a short-term solution to support them whilst their speech is developing whereas for others Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC), in one form or another, will be an important part of their communication throughout their life.

This page contains:

- Using a communication device
- Using signing
- Visual aids
- Communication book
- PECS

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information



<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/speech-language/communicating-without-talking/>

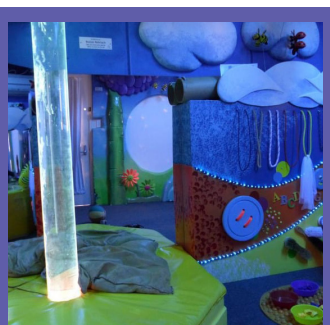
Sensory Regulation

All of us have our own unique response to sensory stimuli that can vary from time to time. This might affect our participation in daily activities.

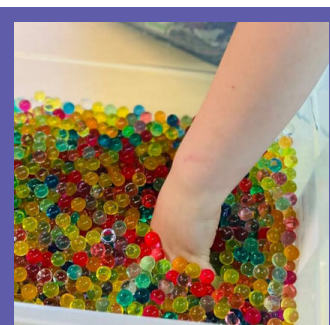
A sensory enriched and adapted environment and opportunities for engagement in a variety of sensory activities supports children and young people's sensory regulation, self-esteem and well-being.



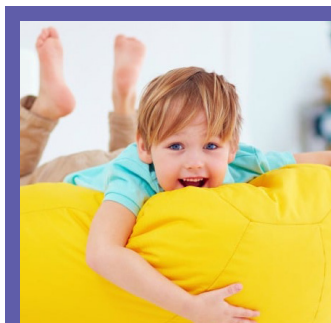
Supportive
Sensory
Environments



Sensory
Alerting



Sensory
Calming



Sensory
Overload



Touch
Sensitivity

Sensory Regulation

Supportive Sensory Environments

All of us have our own unique response to sensory stimuli that can vary from time to time. A sensory rich and adapted environments with opportunities for engagement in a variety of activities can support the child or young person's sensory regulation, self-esteem and well-being.

Supportive sensory environments can be created in a variety of settings, including homes, schools, and communities that provide adequate challenges and opportunities to regulate their sensory system.

By understanding the principles of supportive sensory environments, those who work with children and young people can help them achieve their goals and thrive in their daily lives. Ensure to agree with the child or young person which of the activities and equipment will be used and how - Or offer equipment and activities when requested or needed. Be sure to allow for free play too, with a variety of options available.

This page contains:

- Activities
- Tips on how to create supportive sensory environments including a low stimulation environment

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information



<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/sensory-regulation/supportive-sensory-environments/>

Sensory Regulation

Sensory Alerting

Sensory alerting strategies/activities help to activate the nervous system in preparation for learning. These are most effective for use with children or young people who are in a state of low arousal or alertness. Please note these activities need to be used with caution as they can have the potential to over-alert. If this does happen, please use an organising or calming activity afterwards to help the child or young person to re-regulate.

Tailored sensory input can help children and young people to better manage their daily activities, navigate challenging sensory environments, and achieve their goals.

This page contains:

- Heavy work for muscles
- Deep pressure/light pressure touch
- Fast changing movement
- Environments (stimulating)

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information



<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/sensory-regulation/sensory-alerting/>

Sensory Regulation

Sensory Organising

Sensory organising strategies/activities help to focus the brain for learning as they require planning and performing of actions in a sequence. The brain and body have to work together for the activities to be performed effectively. These types of strategies/activities requires balance and multi-sensory processing.

Ensure to discuss with the child or young person when its Ok to be active and noisy and when its important to be calm. Sometimes it can be helpful to write times and activities down so that the child or young person can review them in their own time or remind themselves of which ones work best in which situations.

This page contains:

- Activities that encourage the brain and body to work together

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information



<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/sensory-regulation/sensory-organising>

Sensory Regulation

Sensory Calming

Many children or young people who have difficulty regulating their response to certain sensory experiences can become overloaded and overwhelmed quickly. As a result, they can become distressed and find it difficult to calm themselves down. This can have a significant impact on their daily life, including their performance at school.

Sensory calming strategies/activities help to give the child or young person an awareness of their body in space. They also give feedback to the muscles which will increase the nervous systems ability to self-regulate sensory input. These strategies are particularly useful to use with children who are feeling anxious or are over-stimulated to help them to calm down.

This page contains:

- Deep pressure
- Heavy work for muscles
- Slow rhythmical movement
- Oral motor
- Sound
- Classroom environment
- Other calming activities

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information



<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/sensory-regulation/sensory-calming/>

Sensory Regulation

Sensory Overload

Sensory overload occurs when the brain is unable to cope with the amount of incoming sensory information. This overwhelm may come from one or more of the sensory systems. It may be due to challenges arising from under/over-responsivity and/or challenges being able to filter out relevant from irrelevant sensory information.

Other stressful events occurring within the child's day (i.e. not knowing the answer to a question at school, having a fall out with a friend) contribute to feelings of overload. Meltdown may follow as a result of a single intense unpleasant sensory experience or as the cumulative result of multiple sensory and/or perceived stressful situations.

This page contains:

- Identifying symptoms of Sensory Overload
- How to help a child that is experiencing Sensory Overload
- Positive Behaviour Plans
- Picture Communication Cards
- Bother Monsters

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information



<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/sensory-regulation/sensory-overload/>

Sensory Regulation

Touch Sensitivity

There is variability amongst children regarding how they experience the sensation of touch. For some children, everyday activities can be challenging due to the way their body experiences touch. For example, this can make hair brushing, teeth brushing or play experiences that are typically enjoyed by children such as sand play or painting unpleasant and something that they may actively avoid.

These children can benefit from strategies that help a child to challenge their sensory system at a level that feels comfortable to them, activities that help to regulate the tactile system and strategies to reduce the tactile demands associated with every day activities.

This page contains:

- Touch and deep pressure activities
- Reducing sensitivities around grooming tasks

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information



<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/sensory-regulation/touch-sensitivity/>

Emotional Regulation

Our sensory systems need input to keep us alert, engaged and productive. Certain types of movement and sensation help us to regulate in order to be able to move, learn and pay attention.

Different activities may work better at different times. Observe the child or young person's energy level and choose playful and motivating activities with them to match their needs at that time. Use your imagination and have fun!



General
Sensory
Strategies



Self-regulation
& Co-regulation



Positive
Behavioural
Strategies

Emotional Regulation

General Sensory Strategies

Our sensory systems need input to keep us alert, engaged and productive. Certain types of movement and sensations help us to regulate, be able to move, learn and pay attention.

Different activities may work better at different times. Observe the child or young person's energy level and choose playful and motivating activities with the student to match their needs at that time.

This page contains:

- Focus & attention activities
- Movement to focus & attention
- Calming sensory activities

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for more
information



<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/emotional-regulation/general-sensory-strategies/>

Emotional Regulation

Self-regulation & Co-regulation

Self-regulation is the ability to monitor and control our feelings, emotions and behaviour in response to the environments and demands. It relies on being able to block out irrelevant information, control impulses and persist in tasks. Co-regulation is an interaction that provides support to another to help them regulate.

Some children and young people will be better able to self-regulate than others, however, whilst regulation can be seen as a skill that can be taught, it is very much dependent on the surroundings, including the people present.

Our regulation fluctuates throughout the day, and different levels of alertness will be appropriate for different activities - it is important that our level of arousal/alertness matches the activity that we want to engage in or that is being demanded of us.

Regulation takes place in response to something, and so ways of managing one's response and reaction can come from within or from external support. Before supporting a child or young person to regulate, think about your own regulation – your state of emotion and arousal can impact on those around you. Think about what you can do to help get yourself in the best frame of mind to support others?

This page contains:

- Regulation Programmes
- The Alert Program
- The Zones of Regulation

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information



<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/emotional-regulation/self-regulation-co-regulation/>

Emotional Regulation Positive Behaviour Strategies

Positive Behaviour Strategies (PBS) is a programme for families of children with additional needs produced by our partners in Norfolk Community Health and Care and Family Action. It was developed originally to give group support to families of children who had been referred for assessment by a specialist team.

This page contains:

- Understanding your child's needs and behaviours
- The 'bucket model' and observing behaviour
- Positive behaviour support
- Communication
- Sensory differences and routines
- Repair, reflect and restore

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for more
information



<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/child-development-additional-needs/behaviour-sleep/norfolk-positive-behaviour-strategies-pbs/>

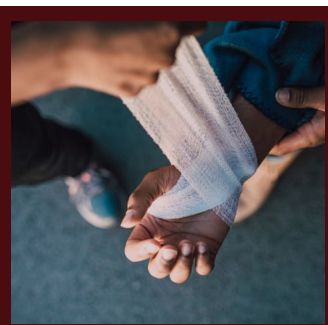
Moving, Handling & Accessibility

Some children and young people need help to move. This can be moving from a wheelchair or buggy to a chair, to the toilet or help them to get up from the floor. This is often called 'moving and handling.'

This section also includes how to manage children and young people's needs after they have had an operation.



Moving & Handling



Managing Needs After Operations

Moving, Handling & Accessibility

Moving & Handling

Some disabled children and young people, those with Special Educational Needs, or those that have had treatment that has affected their mobility may require specialist moving and handling, treatment, or facilities.

Teachers and teacher assistants might be called upon to deal with issues they have not had to address before. Children and young people may not be able to recognise everyday hazards, communicate distress, or move around independently.

Poor moving and handling techniques can result in injuries to staff as well as putting the child or young person at risk. Often, injuries to staff occur on a cumulative basis, due to poor posture and repetitive actions. As such, all staff undertaking such tasks must receive appropriate training, including in the use of any specialist lifting equipment. It is important that you identify any risks and hazards using a risk assessment before attempting to manually move a young person.

This page contains:

- Principles of moving and handling
- The TILE approach (TILE is an acronym that aims to help you carry out a manual handling risk assessment)
- Back care

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for more
information



<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/moving-handling-accessibility/moving-handling/>

Moving, Handling & Accessibility

Managing Needs After an Operation

Some children and young people need admissions to hospital for surgeries and procedures or following traumas such as a broken leg.

Where a child's mobility or activities of daily living are affected, occupational therapists and possibly physiotherapists will be involved in planning how the child and their family will manage once they have been discharged from hospital. This might involve a pre-operative meeting at the hospital to discuss any concerns and any potential changes within the child's environments.

This page contains:

- Management at school
- Therapy interventions post-surgery
- Management at home

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for more
information



<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/moving-handling-accessibility/managing-children-s-needs-after-an-operation/>

Movement Activities & Exercises

Bilateral coordination is the ability to use the two sides of the body together smoothly. Good bilateral coordination is needed in order to carry out symmetrical movements such as jumping, clapping, catching and throwing.



Body
Awareness &
Movements



Therapy
Ball Activities

Movement Activities & Exercises

Body Awareness & Movement

These activities will help build a child or young person's awareness of where their body is in space. It can also help a child or young person to engage and maintain concentration.

It is recommended that they are carried out with a whole class and individually as needed, to both prepare for a tasks and to sustain focus during a task.

This page contains:

- Body boosts
- Whole class warm up activities
- Taking a role in being a class helper
- Movement breaks

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for more
information



<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/movement-activities/body-awareness-movements/>

Movement Activities & Exercises

Therapy Ball Activities

Postural stability activities with a therapy ball aim to develop core strength and postural stability. Incorporate the following activities in a playful and motivating plan that you design with the student. Aim to complete these activities 3 times weekly for up to 10 repetitions.

This page contains:

- Ball taps
- Ball kicks
- Ball walk outs
- Ball roll ups
- Alternate claps
- Alternate ball kicks
- Side dives
- Ball balance

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for more
information



<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/professional-profile/occupational-therapy-digital-library/movement-activities/therapy-ball-activities/>