

# Sensory Pathways 4 Kids

Pediatric Occupational and Physical Therapy



Using the Engine program and Zones of Regulation, we are teaching your child about their arousal regulation levels. We use 4 colors to describe our bodies

## **BLUE: Too Low**

- Tired
- Sick
- Bored
- Shy
- Gloomy
- Depressed
- Exhausted

## **GREEN: Just Right**

- Happy
- Listening
- Following directions
- Content
- Proud
- Okay
- Relaxed
- Focused
- Thankful
- Calm
- Good impulse control

## **YELLOW: Fun Fast**

- Silly
- Excited
- Goofy
- Frustrated
- Overwhelmed
- Anxious
- Worried
- Nervous
- Scared

- Annoyed
- Jealous
- Uncomfortable

**RED: Too fast**

- Mean
- Angry
- Mad
- Terrified
- Aggressive
- Yelling
- Overly silly
- Not listening or following directions
- No impulse control

We would love for families to practice using these words to help your child identify with what color they are in. You can role play as a family and talk about what makes you feel calm and happy and then what makes you feel mad or angry and then talk about if we do get too yellow or into the red, how we can calm ourselves back down into Green.

Green is our Optimal level for Functioning and Learning. This is the zone we need to be in most of the time, but its also appropriate to be in yellow at times as well as blue when we are tired or sick and even red is okay to be mad or angry, but we need to handle ourselves appropriately in the red so we are not aggressive or yelling or hitting etc.

**Calming strategies include:**

- Taking a deep breath
- Calming music
- Slowing our bodies down
- Deep pressure to our shoulders, or bodies
- Having someone give us squishes, or giving our self squishes
- Drinking thick smoothie through a straw
- Warm liquids
- Warm bath
- Pushing or pulling (heavy work activities are calming)
- Turning off the lights, or lowering lights
- Removing self from overwhelming situation
- Decreasing auditory stimulation
- Using less language when disciplining your child (too many words can be auditorily overwhelming)
- Blowing bubbles
- Chewing chewy foods
- And lots more – find what works best for your child

# CHANGING HOW ALERT YOU FEEL

## 1. PUT SOMETHING IN YOUR MOUTH:

- eat hard candy (sugarless if you want)
- eat crunchy food: pretzels, popcorn, nuts, apples
- eat chewy food: gum (1 or more pieces), raisins, bagels, chunks of cheese
- eat sour food: pickles, sour candy
- eat sweet food: fruit or candy
- drink from a straw: use an "exercise bottle" to drink liquids such as a milkshake, a "Slurpie" (partially thaw a frozen drink), or other drinks
- try a combination such as trail mix (crunchy, chewy, sweet), Starburst (chewy, sweet, and tart), or chips dipped into salsa (crunchy and spicy)
- use green rubber tubing
- take slow deep breaths

## 2. MOVE: (try moving before you need to concentrate - ex: homework)

- do isometrics (push arms on a wall or push hands together)
- walk quickly (in school or take the dog for a walk)
- run up and down steps
- do an errand for a teacher
- shake head quickly
- roll neck slowly in circular motion
- jump up and down or try to jump to touch a door frame
- play sports - basketball, swimming, baseball, frisbee, etc.
- do aerobics with a group or at home to music
- dance
- use a therapy ball

## 3. TOUCH:

- try holding and "fidgeting" with a Koosh Ball, paper clips, rubber bands, straw, jewelry, or clay
- rub gently or vigorously on your skin or clothing
- take a cool shower or warm bath
- wash your face with a cold or hot wash cloth
- pet or play with an animal
- hold or lean up against stuffed animal or large pillows

## 4. LOOK:

- put bright lights on in room if you are in low speed
- dim the lights if you are in high speed
- clear off the table you are working on if it distracts you
- watch fish in an aquarium
- read a book or look at magazine

## 5. LISTEN:

- listen to classical type music (even, slow beat)
- listen to hard rock type music (loud bass, uneven beat)
- use a personal cassette player if the music bothers someone else
- avoid loud, noisy places if you are in high speed or if it bothers you when you are trying to concentrate

