

Sensory training script Part 3 Taste

This script is for use by Interpreters and is planned to work alongside the slides in the power-point presentation. Please feel free to print this off if required, and then translate each slide in sequence and in time with the presentation. Each section of the training has a script available.

Slide 1:

Welcome to Part three of the Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's Community Paediatric Occupational Therapy team's Sensory Training for Parents and Carers.

Slide 2

This section is entitled Gustatory /taste and mouth touch.

Slide 3: Gustatory/Taste

It is important to remember that we have touch sensors within our mouth, so some unwanted responses to foods might be linked to the sense of touch NOT taste!

The gustatory touch sense informs us about the texture (crunchy, smooth, and lumpy), temperature and size of foods or items in our mouths.

Cold or hot foods are more alerting whilst warm foods are more calming. Some children struggle with a variation or mixture of these different textures.

Slide 4:

Our taste sensory receptors or 'taste buds' are densely packed on the tongue.

We can recognise salty, sour, sweet, bitter and earthy or umami flavours.

Salt, sour and bitter flavours are generally alerting to our sensory responses.

Umami and sweet flavours are more calming.

Slide 5 Techniques:

Use crunchy, sour or salty foods to alert your child. These can be used at all meal times or just at breakfast to help your child get 'ready to go'; and also during the day as 'sensory snacks'.

OR you can also use warm 'comfort' foods that require chewing, are sweet or umami flavours like mushroom or beetroot as a 'sensory snack' to calm.

Slide 6 Food challenges:

It is natural for children to avoid new or unfamiliar foods, typically it takes a minimum of 20 taste trials for a new food to be accepted as part of the normal diet.

Restricted diets might be limited due to the colour, texture or temperature of foods, some children struggle with combinations of wet and dry foods, such as breakfast cereals, and will opt for dry foods only.

If your child's diet is limited BUT they are a good weight, keep to their preferred diet and introduce new flavours in a similar presentation slowly over time.

Slide 7:

You can add new foods to your child's diet by choosing similar textures to those they prefer, for example apple can be presented in a variety of ways, consider how to present the food:

- **Whole to bite**
- **Halved or in quarters easier to pick up and nibble**
- **Peeled and chopped into bite sized chunks – some children will struggle with the different textures between skin and flesh of the apple.**
- **Partially cooked with varied texture - consider if temperature might make a difference and consider serving warm.**
- **Apple that is Cooked and very soft (again consider the temperature)**
- **Liquidised apple or apple puree**

Or as apple Juice please note it is not recommended to routinely give juice to children through bottles or feeder beakers as this can damage teeth over time.

Slide 8: Consistency

Where possible, try to make new foods as predictable and consistent as you can, this will help your child accept them.

Whole or fresh foods vary, fruit can sometimes be ripe, or under ripe, so soft or hard, it might be juicy or dry, sweet or sour, this makes it difficult for a child to know what taste experience is coming even with familiar foods.

Slide 9:

When introducing new flavours, have a small sample in the texture most like the foods your child will normally eat, place it in a separate dish near your child's food and tell your child what it is. Do not pressure your child into trying the food, if they do that is good, but try to keep any praise low key to avoid adding another sensory

impact to the event (a big celebration might be difficult for your child to cope with and therefore they might avoid the food to avoid the praise).

Keep presenting the food for several days and move it onto their plate but away from other food on the plate once they accept it being there.

You can also support your child becoming familiar with new foods by getting your child involved in preparing foods such as baking a cake, or biscuits, stirring and weighing out ingredients, chopping and peeling foods. It is good to demonstrate tasting foods regularly both at meal times and other times during play.

Use the Sensory techniques of outlining and deep pressure squash as shown in Section 2 Touch to prepare your child for meal times.

Slide 10:

Some children will be very rigid about what foods and brands of foods they will eat. If the food of choice is not limited by a specific texture, or combination of textures or by temperature, this is likely to be a behavioural preference rather than a sensory challenge.

Some children who have Autism have very heightened awareness of differences, including differences of taste. Some of these children will be able to taste any change or addition to familiar foods in even very tiny amounts, it is especially important NOT to try to disguise foods in familiar food for these children, if you do, you might end up making your child mistrust presented foods, and make mealtimes even more difficult.

Slide 11 Risk:

If your child's food intake is restricted and they are underweight, you must consult your Doctor or paediatrician, you might require a referral to another service.

Pica is a behaviour associated with Learning Difficulties, Autism or Mental Health difficulties, this is not a sensory issue and needs to be managed via behavioural techniques, using distraction and engagement, and your child requires adult supervision at all at risk times. There is a useful link at the end of this training.

Slide 12: End

This is the end of Section three Gustatory and Taste. Please go to Section Four. If you do not need any other sensory information please go to the sensory day section of this training, there are two options one for Early Years and Primary aged children and one for Secondary aged children. At the end of these sections you will be given information about how to access a follow up session. Thank you.