



Children are naturally active and impulsive. They need to move around their environment freely to explore and learn about the world around them. They often become over excited, over active or display impulsive behaviour frequently. This can leave parents, other carers and the general public slightly confused and concerned about the child when he or she is not conforming to the expected behaviour within our society. When this begins to interfere with daily life, professional help from an Occupational Therapist is important.

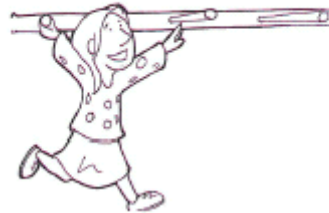


Many people with ADHD will also have additional difficulties such as sleep disorders, sensory processing difficulties, learning difficulties or motor skills challenges. This can make the symptoms of ADHD difficult to define because it is hard to draw the line at where standard levels of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity end and where the clinically significant high levels that require intervention begin. However, if it is significantly affecting a child's ability to learn and their ability to complete normal daily tasks, then a diagnosis and intervention should be sought

### **Possible interventions**

Occupational therapists are able to provide therapy programmes that will address the sensory processing difficulties and help the child to attend and learn by adapting the environment and activities. There are several programmes and activities that occupational therapists may use to provide the child with tools and coping techniques for use within school, home and other social environments. Occupational Therapists will assess a child's individual needs regardless of their diagnosis. This means that other intervention programmes such as visual perceptual or handwriting may be relevant and recommended. Furthermore, teaching strategies and classroom adaptations is particularly important because then the child is able to access accommodations daily with those living and working with the child. This is often very successful type of intervention. The occupational therapist can individually assesses and determine the most suitable strategies and interventions for the individual child.

# ADHD & OT



### **Zones of regulation/ How does your engine run?**

These programmes are frequently used by OT's to support children with ADHD or sensory processing challenges to learn how to self regulate. The children learn this by engaging in activities that help them to understand how they are moving/behaving and learning about suitable strategies that will enable them to be calm and alert.

### **Sensory Diets**

Occupational therapists design individual Sensory Diets to provide a child with the type of stimulation that they need to remain focused and able to learn throughout the school day. The diet may include movement activities such as jumping on a trampoline during break time, carrying heavy objects such as books, chairs and heavy school bags. Other sensory activities include squeezing putty, wearing weighted vests for short periods of time, using a scooter board or playing tug of war. These are incorporated into the school day to ensure the child remains alert and focused for learning. The therapist reviews the activities to determine which ones help the child's brain to become more organised at different times of the day.

