



When children experience early loss, separation, abuse or neglect their brain development is affected in significant ways. They often experience what is known as Developmental Trauma. When a child experiences trauma, often their development is hindered and they do not behave, relate, respond and learn the same as their peers.

Possible sensory difficulties experienced:

- Avoidance of certain foods & textures
- Very sensitive to touch
- Use of sucking, touching or chewing to regulate
- Avoiding routine tasks such as tooth brushing
- Seeking movement and appears restless even when safe
- Difficulty with concentration & attention
- Overwhelmed by noisy busy classrooms
- Difficulty with motor skills such as catching a ball, balance tasks, handwriting and coordination
- Shutting down/zoning out frequently throughout the day
- Difficulty interpreting internal sensations such as hot/cold; hungry/full or when they need the toilet

Sensory Processing & Trauma



Levels of the brain:

1. Sensorimotor and survival (primitive brain)
2. Attachment, emotions and behaviour (limbic brain)
3. Thinking, planning, inhibiting & learning (cortical brain)

Children that have experienced a significant degree of stress and trauma from the early stages of womb development often display difficulties with emotional regulation, including identifying, expressing, and managing emotions. This is because they are often living in a state of survival and therefore operating out of the 'primitive brain'. This is the part of the brain responsible for survival systems of fight/flight/freeze. For traumatised children when they transition into a safe environment, the survival responses do not always turn off. The child is continually in survival mode, and even small, everyday situations can signal 'life or death danger'. For example, raised voices. This has a significant impact on a child's ability to use the higher levels of the brain that are responsible for rationalising, thinking, reasoning, planning and learning.

