A Few Summertime Tips for Kids with SPD

Summertime is upon us! Trees and lawns are turning green, flowers are blooming, the days are warmer and longer and the kids are out of school. Is this the time of year you look forward to or dread because your Sensational Kid has a hard time with transitions, change in routines and schedules, traveling, and all the other things that disrupt their lives in the summer?

Every child deserves to have a happy summer. Here are a few ideas to help them enjoy it.

GARDENING

Gardening can be a fun and therapeutic activity for all different types of SPD.

**Sensory Over-Responsive child:**
- Create interest by taking your child to a garden shop and letting her pick out some seeds for flowers she likes.
- If your child does not like getting his hands dirty, then show him how to plant the seeds yourself or have him pick out a pair of gardening gloves.
- Start slow, plant a few seeds for her at first and offer her a chance, without pressure.
- Check on the plants each day, and as he sees the growth and beautiful flowers budding he will be encouraged to plant more, to water his garden and even weed to make sure his flowers continue to bloom.
- Encourage her to get her hands dirty a little at a time, with a bucket and towel nearby to clean off.
- The goal is to have fun at his pace, and eventually, he may even forget that the feeling of the dirt bothered him!

**Sensory Under-Responsive child:**
- Planting seeds is also good for an under-responsive child. Try to find very fragrant or bright flowers of various textures.
- Create interest by visiting the nursery and exploring the colors, smells, and feeling of the different flowers.
- Digging through the dirt and planting seeds can “wake up” the senses.
- Encourage him to run through the sprinklers on very hot days.

**Sensory Craving child:**
- Remember, sensory cravers need the right type of sensation, not just a lot of it. Heavy work activities involved in gardening, like digging and moving materials, can provide calming sensation to the muscles and joints.
- Encourage your sensory craver to dig holes, shovel dirt into a wheel barrel, push a wheel barrel and empty dirt, move rocks, unravel and pull the hose out, water with a watering can or pull weeds.

PLAY DATES

Socializing can be difficult for Sensational Kids. Follow these tips to help your child be successful.
- Start with just one other child and a familiar setting...working toward inviting another or more as he becomes more comfortable.
- Plan the activity ahead of time, with your child. Activities with structure that are preferred and familiar are best to start with. Some examples may include: an art project or a favorite game.
- Support conversation and negotiation between the children to help build social skills and confidence.
  - Keep the play date fairly short until you know what your child can handle.