

Title:

## **Practical sensory programmes for students with autistic spectrum disorder and other special needs**

Author: **Sue Larkey**  
Year of Publication: **2006**  
Published by: **Jessica Kingsley**  
ISBN: **1 84310 479 2**  
Number of pages: **112**  
Price: **£17.99**

Reviewed by:  
**Sheena Drake**  
Deputy Headteacher,  
Hayfield School, Wirral

This book is entitled, *Practical Sensory Programmes*, and that is exactly what it provides. It opens with a brief description of some of the sensory difficulties a child with autism might encounter, and includes within this, movement, as well as the traditionally understood five senses. It also alludes to functional situations such as toileting and sleeping.

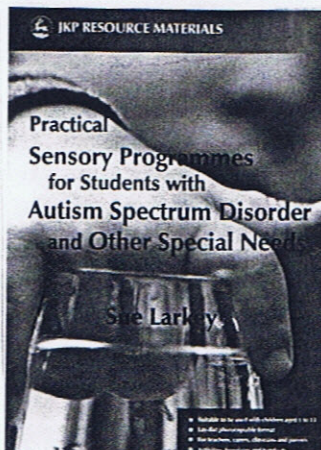
The simple six-step programme begins with a very user-friendly sensory checklist and scoring system. This covers each sense, as well as movement, and outlines responses that may be observed if a child is either hyper or hypo sensitive. It is made clear from the scoring system which sections of the programme may be useful for working on with a child. Each section contains practical suggestions for activities that may be useful in addressing needs, specific aims and outcomes for children, and strategies for assisting a child who may be especially sensitive to a specific stimulus. There is also a useful language link, both for vocabulary as well as functional phrases, with which to communicate likes or dislikes.

The programmes are supported by proformas for observation and evaluation. A particularly useful section is on positive behaviour support and strategies to address behaviours that may respond to specific sensory activities. While there is not an in-depth theoretical debate on sensory issues in autism, it is underpinned by current understandings. Its strength is in its jargon-free, and easy to use format, crammed full of practical suggestions and strategies. Professionals can pick up and use this immediately and know that they are addressing an important area of need.

This is a godsend of a book for busy practitioners. So much so, that the staff have already asked me to order more copies. What better recommendation?



Reviewed in:

THE FRONTLINE OF LEARNING DISABILITY,  
WINTER 2006

PRACTICAL SENSORY PROGRAMMES FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AND OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS, by Sue Larkey (2006), Jessica Kingsley Publishers, ISBN 1-84310-479-2 Price €17.99.

Positive behaviour supports break down the behaviours, the sensory issues and activities by using sensory activities as rewards and desensitisation. The book looks at ways to help an overwhelmed child in relaxation, using more sensory activities and using visual supports in sensory programmes.

Parents and frontline staff will find this workbook a rich source of fun ideas for improving sensory processing in autistic spectrum disorder with techniques that are easily adaptable for people with other special needs.

Kathy O'Grady,  
Senior Psychologist,  
E-mail [kathy.ogrady@scjms.ie](mailto:kathy.ogrady@scjms.ie)

A highly effective way of working with people with autistic spectrum disorder is sensory integration therapy. In Sue Larkey's recently published *Practical sensory programmes for students with autism spectrum disorder and other special needs*, she has demystified sensory integration and makes clear some of the mystifying behaviours associated with autism. Autism spectrum disorder is characterised by the inability to integrate or make sense of sensory experiences. A child, for example, might constantly put their fingers in their ears if they are hyperacoustic or sensitive to certain sounds or frequencies. Sensory integration is the organisation and processing of sensations from different sensory channels, such as touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste and movement for meaningful use.

This practical book encourages every person to use sensory integration as a meaningful way of understanding and helping the person with sensory issues. Six helpful steps are given:

- Step 1 – Assessment and sensory checklist.
- Step 2 – Specific sensory aims and strategies.
- Step 3 – General sensory programme activities.
- Steps 4, 5 and 6 for Programming, Evaluation and Re-Assessment.