



SENSORY INTEGRATION AND HAPPINESS IN AUTISTIC CHILDREN: A PHILOSOPHICAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

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Abstract: For autistic children, happiness can often seem elusive. However, emerging research suggests that proper sensory integration may be vital to unlocking their emotional well-being. This paper coincides with the recent surge in interdisciplinary approaches to autism research, with a particular focus on the role of sensory integration in promoting happiness and well-being among autistic children. The primary objective of this study is to elucidate the concept and characteristics of sensory integration, defined as the brain's capacity to process and organize sensory information, and its critical role in shaping emotional well-being and overall happiness in autistic children. By focussing on the sensory experience, the study advocates for recognizing and supporting the unique ways in which autistic children experience joy, ensuring that happiness is experienced in ways that are authentic and meaningful to them. Sensory integration significantly influences emotional regulation, comfort, social engagement, and independence. This paper examines the theoretical foundations and practical implications of sensory integration in autism interventions, contributing to a more holistic and clear understanding of autism and well-being. Furthermore, this discussion extends beyond clinical and psychological paradigms to engage with philosophical perspectives, particularly Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia*, i.e., the idea of human flourishing, and the contribution of the phenomenology of the senses in enhancing autistic children's emotional qualities and in understanding their experiences. In conclusion, this study highlights the transformative potential of sensory integration practices in fostering holistic well-being and more inclusive approaches to happiness for autistic children.

Index Terms - Autism, Happiness, Sensory integration, Eudaimonia, Phenomenology

Introduction

When all the senses are fully coordinated, autistic children tend to feel more comfortable, secure, and engaged with their environment, ultimately leading to increased happiness. Therefore, understanding sensory integration is very important.

The concept of Sensory integration was initially introduced to the human mind by Dr. A. Jean Ayers, a therapist working in the USA, who is a well-trained educator in the fields of psychology and neuroscience. It is understood from his theory that if there is a lack or deficit in sensory integration, it will significantly affect the behavior of the autistic child. Sensory integration refers to a process that integrates all sensory

information from the body and its surroundings. From a philosophical perspective, it is a process by which the mind unifies and makes sense of diverse sensory information, thereby constructing a coherent and intelligible experience of the world. It is an essential part of daily life; without proper sensory function, no one can perform daily activities effectively. Seeing a typical person struggle with illness, sensory loss and experiencing a collapse of sensory integration can evoke empathy and concern. However, for autistic children, this is a recurring and debilitating reality, and considering the severity of their challenges, society should help them improve and enhance their sensory integration, as it is not just a necessity but also their fundamental right.

Sensory integration is a neurobiological process that begins at birth and continues throughout life. Although this case of the sensory deficit is not mentioned in the diagnostic criteria¹. However, some autistic children are seen as lacking in sensory stimuli and things do not happen smoothly and are often disrupted. According to recent statistics, around 5-16.5% of people experience challenges with sensory integration, which affects their daily activities, including dressing, eating, socializing, and learning. Also, this impairment in sensory integration often leads to difficulties with communication. So, autistic children should be looked after properly by their parents or caregivers and by doing so, they can manage their child's sensory integration deficits promptly. In more challenging cases, where significant improvement is difficult, early intervention and intensive support can substantially minimize the impact of these deficits, leading to a noticeable improvement in their quality of life.

Sensory integration also refers to the process by which the brain combines information from multiple senses and addresses some questions to create a unified, coherent experience of the world². This integration of senses is essential for perceiving, processing, and responding to sensory information, and it plays a significant role in shaping emotional experiences. Sensory integration, also known as sensory processing in common terms, is simply the way one integrates things that they see, hear, smell, touch and even how they feel.

Studies have found that the eight senses, visual (sight), auditory (hearing), tactile (touch), gustatory (taste), olfactory (smell), vestibular (balance and movement), proprioceptive (body position) and interoceptive (internal sensation), all work together to help individuals process and respond to sensory activities. However, among these, only three are generally considered to be mostly affected when there is a deficiency in sensory integration³. These are:

¹ Lang, R., O'Reilly, M., Healy, O., Rispoli, M., Lydon, H., Streusand, W., Davis, T., Kang, S., Sigafoos, J., Lancioni, G., & Didden, R. (2012). Sensory integration therapy for autism spectrum disorders: A systematic review. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 6(3), 1004–1018. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2012.01.00>

² Bennett, D. J., & Hill, C. S. (Eds.). (2022). *Sensory integration and the unity of consciousness*. The MIT Press.

³ Lockett, E. (2022, August 19). Understanding sensory integration. Healthline. Retrieved from

<https://www.healthline.com/health/autism/sensory-integration>

- 1) **Tactile System**- The receptors in the human skin process sensations of touch, including pressure, temperature and pain. When there is difficulty in this system, a person's hypersensitivity or sensitivity to touch might be affected, further it can lead to creating an issue while interacting with the environment.
- 2) **Proprioceptive System**- The muscles and joints help in sensing the body's position and movement in space. This sense allows an individual to make himself aware of the surrounding environment, which are truly necessary for proper coordination of the bodily movements and postures.
- 3) **Vestibular System**- Located in the inner ear, this system helps in enabling individual to navigate their surroundings. Also, it helps to maintain equilibrium, process balance and body movement⁴. When this system is affected, the balance and posture also will be affected.

When these three systems are affected, it can lead to more complex issues, like trouble with motor planning, coordination and execution, it can also increase anxiety, stress, frustration and many more. The child can sometimes overreact and sometimes under responsive. If these systems do not function properly, it may result in speech or language delays, thereby making it hard for them to communicate with people around them. So, strengthening sensory integration is necessary to make all the above-mentioned systems function more effectively

The symptoms and signs of autistic children vary from one another, but in most cases, the dysfunction in perceiving things and processing sensory activities is very common. This will further lead to a lack of communication and affect their neurological functioning in their daily activities. The primary objective of this research study is to understand how these abnormal sensory functions can make an autistic child's life miserable and snatch away all their happiness.

Since defining happiness is quite difficult, as it does not have any rigid rules and describing it from only a few people's perspective won't be fair, still, one should understand that staying happy is an essential component in life for growth and progress. For autistic children, happiness is clearly understanding their interests, may it be chilling with their friends or if they want to be in an isolated place, whatever it is, wherever it is, supporting them is incredibly important. Because sometimes, due to the dysfunction in their sensory integration, they are greatly affected and they don't want to mingle with anyone, often feeling pressured when asked to seek happiness and assurance from their environment. Their brain is sometimes bombarded with too much information from people around them. Examining and addressing how sensory needs can reduce stress and emotional imbalances is very important. Providing them with therapeutic practices and recognizing their unique needs will pave the way for them to lead happier and more fulfilling lives.

⁴ "The Eight Sensory System". Learning Links, 2 April, 2025, <https://www.learninglinks.org.au/resources/the-eight-sensory-systems/>

Sensory Challenges in Autism

Sensory processing challenges are a hallmark of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) as they greatly influence an individual's experiences and their interactions with the world. Autistic children have been facing different kinds of challenges in this matter and it is very common among them. Some individuals may have sensitivities in certain senses among the traditional five senses, while others may be sensitive to all the senses. Either way, having a sound sense is necessary for an individual as senses have been serving as the gateway to reality since time immemorial. Each autistic person is unique. Beyond the five senses, some may experience sensitivities related to balancing things, i.e., the vestibular, body position and movement awareness, i.e., the proprioception, and internal bodily cues and sensations, i.e., the interoception. There have been some reports that claim that autistic children also have sensitivities to magnetism and electricity and to magnetic radiation as well⁵. So, if the parents or the caregivers find out that their child has these sensitivity issues, they must consult the doctors or the therapists at the earliest, as the senses are an integral part of human experience, and this is the only vital way to perceive and interact with the people around. The more the child understands their sensory perception, the more development there will be in their cognitive abilities.

Additionally, some face challenges in experiencing both hypersensitivity and hyposensitivity, while others may experience only one of these, and some may not experience either of them. Now, let's see what exactly is hypersensitivity and hyposensitivity.

Hypersensitivity- This happens when a child gets more sensitive than others, even in tiny matters. It includes difficulty tolerating loud noises, difficulty adapting to socially crowded areas. One thing very common among all autistic children with hypersensitivity is their aversion to bright lights and colours.

Hyposensitivity- This sensitivity occurs when a child needs or craves something very extreme. It includes craving deep pressure, like a tight hug, constant need for movement. In this case of sensitivity, they are attracted to loud noises and bright colours or lights, unlike hypersensitivity.

It is a challenge for autistic children in both cases, because there is no balance and everything becomes extreme, like it will be more or it will be less, nothing in between. And when they cannot cope with this, sensory overload happens. It becomes very difficult to control and maintain self-regulation. The caregivers and the parents should be very careful in handling them when they face extreme situations and accommodate them with proper care. Here, in this case, 'accommodate' refers to giving them ease and comfort and modifying their surroundings, using whatever means and strategies are possible, so they can socialize, learn new things and adjust to their environment⁶.

⁵ Bogdashina, O. (2024, March 11). Beyond the traditional: More than five (or eight) senses to consider.
<https://www.olgabogdashina.com/post/beyond-the-traditional-more-than-five-or-eight-senses-to-consider>

⁶ <https://www.autismspeaks.org/sensory-issues>.

It is very important to recognize their difficulties and the different types of experiences they are witnessing in their day-to-day life, including how their sensory input. Sensory input is knowing how a person experiences their senses or their internal bodily sensations. Some autistic individuals are so sensitive that even slight changes in stimulus intensity affect their sensory sensitivities. Their challenges to these sensitivities can be reduced by finding out what kind of sensitivity they have, either hyper or hypo. And the caregivers can provide them with measures accordingly. An occupational therapist can also assist them whenever they need. Sleep deprivation has also been considered one of the hindrances, as it interrupts the proper functioning of sensory integration. When there is sleep dysfunction, individuals' mood, attention, memory, and other cognitive functions are drastically affected, but it is considerably higher in the autistic population than in neurotypical individuals⁷.

To ensure autistic individuals lead happy and fulfilled lives, like typical individuals, society needs to treat them equally, whether they react/response or do not react/response in a specific way that society prefers. Society should accept and accommodate differences in their communication styles, behaviors, and responses, rather than trying to conform them to fit into narrow expectations of what is considered 'typical' or 'normal'. This is something they cannot work on themselves. What is better for society is to make their lives more pleasant, whatever and however their situations may be. The society must make them feel like they are truly considered.

The Link between Sensory Integration and Happiness

At least some ideas can be grasped from the above paragraph about what sensory integration is, and how it affects the moods and the lifestyle of an autistic child. Various theories and models have been approached by many researchers and psychologists regarding sensory integration. But hardly anyone focuses on how it can directly link to a child's happiness and contentment. Capturing and understanding their emotional state is very important in studying autism.

Sensation and emotions are inextricably connected, as sensations can trigger emotions and emotions can further influence how one perceives and processes sensations⁸. In fact, this connection is a basic aspect of sensory integration theory, which recognizes that sensory experiences can have a deep impact on fostering an individual's emotions, including their happiness.

⁷ Lang, R., O'Reilly, M., Healy, O., Rispoli, M., Lydon, H., Streusand, W., Davis, T., Kang, S., Sigafoos, J., Lancioni, G., & Didden, R. (2012). Sensory integration therapy for autism spectrum disorders: A systematic review. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 6(3), 1004–1018. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2012.01.006>

⁸ Rodriguez, M., & Kross, E. (2023). Sensory emotion regulation. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 27(4), 379–390. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2023.01.008>

The way the human mind processes sensory information, like the way it analyses and organises, indicates how it can respond to the environmental stimuli and ultimately influences daily experiences and interactions. This analytical ability is often seen as weak in autistic children, thereby affecting the quality of their lives. So, sensory integration is strongly correlated with the life that an individual possesses. Studies have also shown that high and low levels of sensitivity can decrease or increase the quality of life. When a child has high levels of sensitivity, they struggle to adapt to their environment and hardly mingle with others; also, they cannot adjust to anything that is out of their league, e.g., when they get extreme visual or auditory stimuli, they get discomfort easily and try to avoid the situation as soon as possible. This can result in frustration and a lack of joy and pleasure, ultimately reducing their life satisfaction as they cannot improve their social competency and interpersonal skills. Consequently, this may have negative implications in their overall health condition.

In this context of autism, the ethical ideas of Aristotle can be approached and applied as he emphasized very well on the well-being of an individual while explaining Eudaimonia. The word 'Eudaimonia' is often translated by many as the Greek word for happiness and it is all about individuals' happiness and their welfare⁹. Aristotle presented this idea of happiness in one of his most influential works, 'Nicomachean Ethics'. Here, he talks about the ultimate purpose of human existence and the requirements needed for humans to live. According to him, happiness is more than just a word; it's a feeling that transcends and completes one's life. It is the highest value in life, immeasurable and irreversible. Eudaimonia, basically includes almost all the range of human activities, they do not focus not only the theoretically intellect¹⁰ as it needs the practical intellect as well in order to attain a great personality that has great moral values and wisdom. The philosophy of Eudaimonia, which is defined as the way of living life in a truly flourishing manner and to create as much happiness as possible in life, can greatly contribute to helping an autistic child gain their happiness. As mentioned earlier, while the term 'eudaimonia' is often translated simply as 'happiness', however, this might sound a little skeptical, because it cannot be just happiness, it should encompass something more than that, like, there should be the inclusion of joy, contentment and pleasure, which is necessary for a child's upbringing and in making their life more prosperous. In this approach, the problem of sensory integration in autistic children can be viewed as just a part of their temperament, and the children should learn to accept their life as it is, without perceiving their differences as a challenge or disorder in them. Accepting their innate differences can lead to less trauma and stress, and ultimately, to focusing on possible treatments and therapies to enhance their happiness. And as Aristotle said, it takes time to build a happy life, for one swallow does not make spring. Similarly, autistic children should also take their own time to discover their own happiness, and for this, acceptance and realisation are a must; only then can they flourish in life.

⁹ Moore, Catherine. "What is Eudaimonia? Aristotle and Eudaimonic Wellbeing". Happiness & SWB. 22, Oct. 2024 Moore, C. (2021, May 3). What is eudaimonia? Aristotle and eudaimonic well-being. Positive-Psychology.com. Retrieved 26 June, 2025, from <https://www.positivepsychology.com/eudaimonia/>

¹⁰ Nagel, T. (1972) "Aristotle on Eudaimonia." *Phronesis*, vol. 17, no. 3, 1972, pp. 252–59. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4181892>.

Also, it is observed that some individuals who tend to avoid and remain unaware of their negative emotions often experience a deeply fulfilling and happy life. This raises the question of, then why is not trying to avoid being sad, fear, guilt, pain, and anger whenever it is possible? Some might reply, maybe because experiencing these negative emotions is necessary for human growth and self-mastery rather than avoiding. Nevertheless, it is equally important to avoid them, if possible, especially if that specific thing is disrupting the inner peace and harmony. Let's make things clear, see, as everyone knows, that 'Negative emotions are like storms.' While they can be intense and uncomfortable, they can also bring valuable lessons and growth. However, it's not necessary to stand in the storm all the time. If possible, it is better to take shelter and avoid the storm when it's not necessary, since seeking happiness is more important for an individual's peace of mind. And by doing so, an individual can maintain a balance between self-growth and attaining happiness, because there are many people out there who focus only on the negative part of life and completely forget what truly brings happiness.

As Aristotle stated, 'Eudaimonia' can be achieved through constant effort and the practice of virtue¹¹, this concept can also be applied in attaining autistic children's happiness by encouraging them to practice for the development of their analytical skills, their capabilities and in building their confidence. With this confidence, they will be able to live a more fulfilling life and also will cultivate their own character throughout their life. Philosophy is fundamentally concerned with human well-being, which encompasses the happiness and fulfilment of individuals, both physically and emotionally¹². By applying philosophical principles to everyday life, one can ultimately improve their lifestyle and overall quality of life. This statement shows how much happiness is important in an individual's life, so everyone's happiness is equally important in this matter. In order for a child to live their life full of happiness, a proper appreciation, understanding and acceptance, together as a whole, are essential.

Aristotle also mentioned three kinds of deficiencies, in which he put the case of internal disorder in one of the three categories, which can further be somewhat related to this study of deficits in sensory integration. The three categories are continence, incontinence and vice, all of which involve some lack of internal harmony that hinders the way of attaining happiness¹³. When these categories are understood and applied effectively in practical life, individuals can make significant progress in achieving happiness. Therefore, to have an appropriate and correct practical reasoning is necessary. And for correct reasoning, good and proper functioning of the senses is essential. Thus, it is a self-reinforcing cycle, where sensory integration is necessary for a good and virtuous life to gain happiness, and vice versa.

Phenomenology and Sensory Experience

¹¹ [The Concept of Eudaimonia in Aristotelian Ethics](#)

¹² Kraut, R. (2022). Aristotle's ethics. In E. N. Zalta & U. Nodelman (Eds.), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2022 ed.). Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/aristotle-ethics/>.

¹³ Kraut, R. (2022). Aristotle's ethics. In E. N. Zalta & U. Nodelman (Eds.), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2022 ed.). Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/aristotle-ethics/>.

Phenomenology is the study of how humans perceive things around them. It is truly focused on how individuals experience things, which includes not only physical and outer entities but also their sensory experiences from within as well as from their surroundings. It studies the experience, the experience that is experienced from the person's perspective, mostly the conscious ones. This experience is not constant; it varies from one person to another, and it also interprets various aspects of life, including sensory perceptions, thought processes, memories, imagination, emotions, pleasures, physical awareness, pain, actions, and social interactions¹⁴. These different aspects of human experience help individuals make sense of the world around them and make their lives more meaningful. From some philosophical point of view, sensory phenomenology is just the way one understands the world they live in, but the researcher here rejects this view because the sentence seems to be incomplete, as it only accounts for understanding. What kind of understanding are they talking about here? Apart from simple understanding, one should also try to find out the emotional connection, try to be more empathetic and compassionate towards others. As in the case of autistic children, they may experience sensory overload or abnormal sensory integration, which can affect their perception of the world. Each and every individual process sensory information uniquely, and their subjective experience cannot be fully grasped by others, despite multiple explanations. This is due to the complexities of the human mind, which struggles with executive functioning and exhibits varying cognitive strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, to understand their phenomenology, understanding the perception of their world, their sensory abnormalities, as well as their emotional intelligence, including empathy, attention, and focus, is crucial.

Below is an example highlighting the importance of Sensory Accommodations in Fostering Happiness among Autistic Children:

Two autistic children, Maya (an autistic child who has hypersensitivity) and Saya (who has hyposensitivity), enter a sensory room (it is a room specially designed for the autistic child to provide calm, safety, comfort and focus, usually with lighting, sound systems and other related objects). Maya was immediately overwhelmed by the bright colors and sensitive lights and sounds, so she covered her ears and eyes to avoid the scenario, and it can be seen that she is not happy in the environment, as she was feeling anxious and disoriented. Whereas Saya, while entering the same room, overlooked the bright colors and lights and walked calmly, she hardly reacted to the sensory stimuli.

In this case, both children have experienced unique sensory processing styles that affect their experiences and understanding of the world. This shows that the perception of sensory integration varies from one individual to another. It is necessary to find out where their happiness lies so that this kind of situation can be avoided. Later, Maya was taken to a quiet, dimly lit room with soft music, where she smiled and began to relax; her happiness could be seen in this new environment. Saya, on the other hand, was thrilled to explore

¹⁴ Smith, D. W. (2003). Phenomenology. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2003 Edition). Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/>

a ball pit, laughing and playing, her hyposensitivity allowing her to enjoy the intense sensory experience. Therefore, it is important to understand and accommodate individual sensory needs to foster happiness according to the type of sensitivity they have.

Another true incident that happened between a grown-up woman, named Tina, and a young girl, Nisha, highlighting the sensory integration challenges that an autistic child faces in social interactions, is mentioned below:

Tina encountered a young girl, Nisha, and noticed a striking contrast between Nisha's enthusiastic interaction with one of Tina's seniors and her rejection of Tina's request to befriend her, to spend some time with her, and to play around. Tina was initially disappointed by the way Nisha treated her, despite Nisha's young age of around 6-7 years. However, Tina later found out that Nisha had autism spectrum disorder (ASD), which often involves difficulties with social interactions and sensory processing. So, Nisha's initial rejection was, in fact, her way of maintaining and protecting herself to regulate her sensory experience from the unknown environment.

The next day, Tina approached Nisha again and asked the same question, 'Can we be friends?' Nisha attempted to flee, but Tina gently caught her and asked, 'Why are you running away from me?' Nisha replied, 'Because I don't want to make friends with unknown people'. Tina asked her, 'What should I do so that we can be friends and you will not find me a stranger anymore?' Nisha gradually started touching Tina's hair and asked, 'Why do you have very long hair? Just cut it off. Tina explained that girls often have long hair and Nisha could also grow her hair. Upon hearing that, Nisha tried to run away from Tina again. At that moment, Tina realized the importance of understanding Nisha's needs and desires. So, Tina approached her again, and Nisha repeated the same thing 'Cut your hair, and we will be friends. Then, at last, Tina agreed to Nisha's request, just to ensure and prioritize her comfort and give her the response that she would like to hear. As a result, Nisha agreed to befriend Tina, and she started playing with Tina.

It is this kind of little act that matters to them; this experience highlights the importance of considering the subjective experience of ASD, particularly about sensory integration, as this can influence her social interactions and behavior, which will later be a form of happiness to her. Further, she can gradually modify her sensory environment and create a sense of comfort. The example is highlighted here because the researcher believes that this will not only reflect the importance of sensory integration in the promotion of emotional well-being, but this will also help in pointing out how understanding and respecting their needs and sensory preferences can create meaningful connections.

Optimizing Sensory Integration: Benefits and Practical Strategies

As mentioned earlier, sensory integration is an inherent part of how humans make sense of the environment they live in, yet it is not always functioning optimally in many cases of differently abled children.

So, let's go through the benefits of maintaining a healthy and proper functioning of sensory integration in autistic children to bring out their inner happiness. Some of the important benefits that can be highlighted are:

1. The proper execution of sensory integration can help a child to self-regulate without much dependence on caregivers and this will improve their functioning in school, at home, as well as among different communities. With this improvement, they can participate more confidently and consistently in their daily routines.
2. Improved sensory integration allows people to process their auditory and visual system more efficiently and thus, will lead to better communication, which is very important as it is only through proper communication that their basic needs and desires can be expressed.
3. The ability to manage sensory stimuli will be improved and reduce overwhelm. The child can filter unnecessary input from the surroundings and focus on what is truly necessary and meaningful information and ideas.
4. Sensory integration also helps in improving coordination, balance, and fine motor skills. Here, by coordination, it refers to the smooth functioning of the whole body. Balance, which is guided by the vestibular system of the eight systems, helps in maintaining the posture and structure while movements. Fine motor skills also support the bodily movements of a child in their daily basic activities, such as, cleaning, tying shoelaces, washing dishes, etc.
5. Also, this process helps the children in identifying whom they can interact with and how they can improve their social behaviour. They can better engage in social interactions and respond appropriately.

Therefore, ensuring that their sensory information is processed accurately and checking on them regularly for their efficient processing is very necessary. And after acknowledging them, steps to support and improve their deficiency can be taken. To enhance their sensory integration, various strategies such as therapies, techniques, methods and approaches can be accommodated for them.

Sensory integration therapy: This is believed to be widely known as one of the best approaches for all those facing sensory integration challenges. This therapy provides an effective and good quality of life as it helps in developing new and positive adaptive behaviors for the autistic individual¹⁵.

However, despite being considered effective, research has shown that this therapy is very limited and it may be a helpful option for specific people with autism spectrum disorder and not in all cases. So, it's better to go for simple sensory strategies which can be easily followed even without the occupational therapists, but with the help of their parents as well as their caregivers, after finding out the basic needs of the autistic child. Like, for example, for a child who is overwhelmed by anything that is excessive, it may be loud or extreme noise, ear defenders, or soothing ear buds to avoid the situation, while in the case of extreme and bright lights,

¹⁵ Lockett, E. (2025, August 12). How does sensory integration therapy work? Nicole Washington, DO.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/autism/sensory-integration-therapy>

they can be given tinted glasses for comprehensive protection. Additionally, for a child who is intoxicated by a certain smell, can be given fragrance or oil that's convenient to them. Likewise, if the child seeks for physical hug or any deep pressure that can calm them, they can be provided with rash vests and rugby base layers that are cheaply available¹⁶.

Apart from all of these, a sensory diet that balances their lifestyle can also be customized by including certain activities that are designed and incorporated only for them. This can be started in a basic way by setting up charts and routines of what to do and what not to do accordingly, so as to improve their focus and attention. Organizing aerobic dances or gymnastics, or anything that is autism-friendly, will bring a smile to them, thereby enhancing their sensory integration. Specific sessions can also be organized for them, like heavy muscle work, skipping, jumping, meditations, etc., because this will reduce their anxiety and overcome their challenges and come back stronger¹⁷. Another strategy that can be implemented is some sensory play, like playdough, sand, water, or swings and developing sensory-friendly public spaces, such as parks, museums, where there are different sections that can be tolerated by both hypersensitivity and hyposensitivity autistic children. In some autistic cases, swimming sessions and massage or spa treatments showed positive outcomes.

Conclusion

It is already evident from the above discussion how crucial sensory integration is in regulating and fostering happiness and excitement in autistic children. Not only happiness, but proper sensory integration also contributes to the child's learning of new knowledge and ideas. So, the execution of sensory integration will benefit the overall development of the child and there will be fewer behavioral problems. It is very important to find out their weaknesses and strengths to cope with their problems. Recognizing and addressing their sensory integration challenges will help the caregivers manage their behaviors properly and, accordingly, can provide them with appropriate strategies. Addressing and understanding the sensory issue of the child will make a paramount change in the educational field, as well as the social inclusion of the child. The strategies aimed at sensory integration will not only promote their emotional well-being but also enhance their physical growth and fitness. Moreover, it will facilitate better social interactions and bring positive learning outcomes.

The main aim of this study was to ensure that all autistic children get the happiness they deserve. Here, the researcher reflected on John Stuart Mill's (a British philosopher) principle of 'maximum happiness for the maximum number', as a profound reminder of the importance of inclusivity in efforts to improve the well-being of all and flourish in their lives. This principle must extend to autistic individuals as well, as they are also human, irrespective of their challenges or whatever, but to recognize their right to experience

¹⁶ Laurie, C. (2022, May 13). Ten simple sensory strategies for autistic children. National Autistic Society. <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/professional-practice/sensory-strategies>

¹⁷ Laurie, C. (2022, February 17). Why is occupational therapy important for autistic children? National Autistic Society. <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/professional-practice/occupation-therapy>

happiness, joy and fulfilment, and a higher quality of life alongside others, is a must. The society should also look into this matter deeply and provide happiness to autistic children as much as they can. It won't cause them any harm merely by lending a listening ear to their tantrums and issues once in a while. The small acts of kindness shown by society when they need support will have a lasting impact. Building meaningful social connections is a key to their happiness for some autistic children, while for others, solitude can also bring joy. So, a very understanding and flexible environment that can adjust to the needs of autistic children is preferable.

In this context, the role of parents and caregivers plays a vital role in shaping them to become more confident and stronger, with greater comfort. It is only with their support that they will nurture their growth, happiness, and fulfilment. The care and support shown to them in times of need will empower them to thrive and excel in their life. Also, new techniques and theories that can provide tools and innovative ideas are highly necessary for a feasible understanding of their issues.

Since the harmonious development of a child relies heavily on the proper functioning of various sensory systems, examining and understanding the concept of linking sensory integration and happiness was essential. Sensory integration is, therefore, the foundation for a child's overall development, and with proper integration of all the senses, the child will be able to understand the phenomena of their surrounding environment, excel in self-motivation, and become a better person with positive behavior, culminating in happiness and fulfilment from within.

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