Autism, Sensory Processing and Functional AAC use

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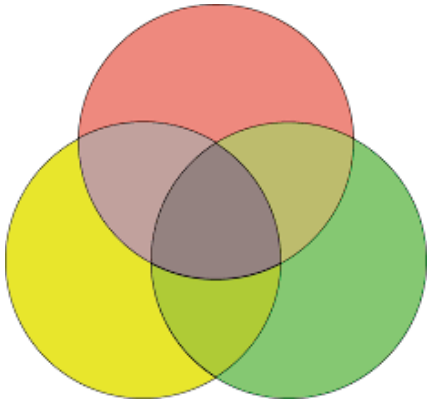
What does the research say: Diagnosis

- 41% Autism
- 24% Seizure Disorders
- 20% Cerebral Palsy
- 19% Cognitive Impairment
- 13% Down Syndrome
- 7% Chromosomal abnormality
- 5% Premature (less than 35 weeks)
- 2% Developmental Delay
- 42% OTHER diagnosis even more rare than the above categories

This adds up to way more to 100% due to dual diagnosis

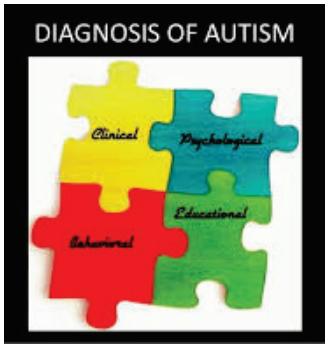
Dual Diagnosis



- 52% have more than one diagnosis
- Why so many diagnosis?
  - Do they qualify for more services?
  - Does it get the a better school placement?
  - Do those looking at AAC have complicated bodies?

  alternative communication?
- Dual diagnosis disqualify a participant if the incidence is so high – but this is messy

Autism Diagnosis



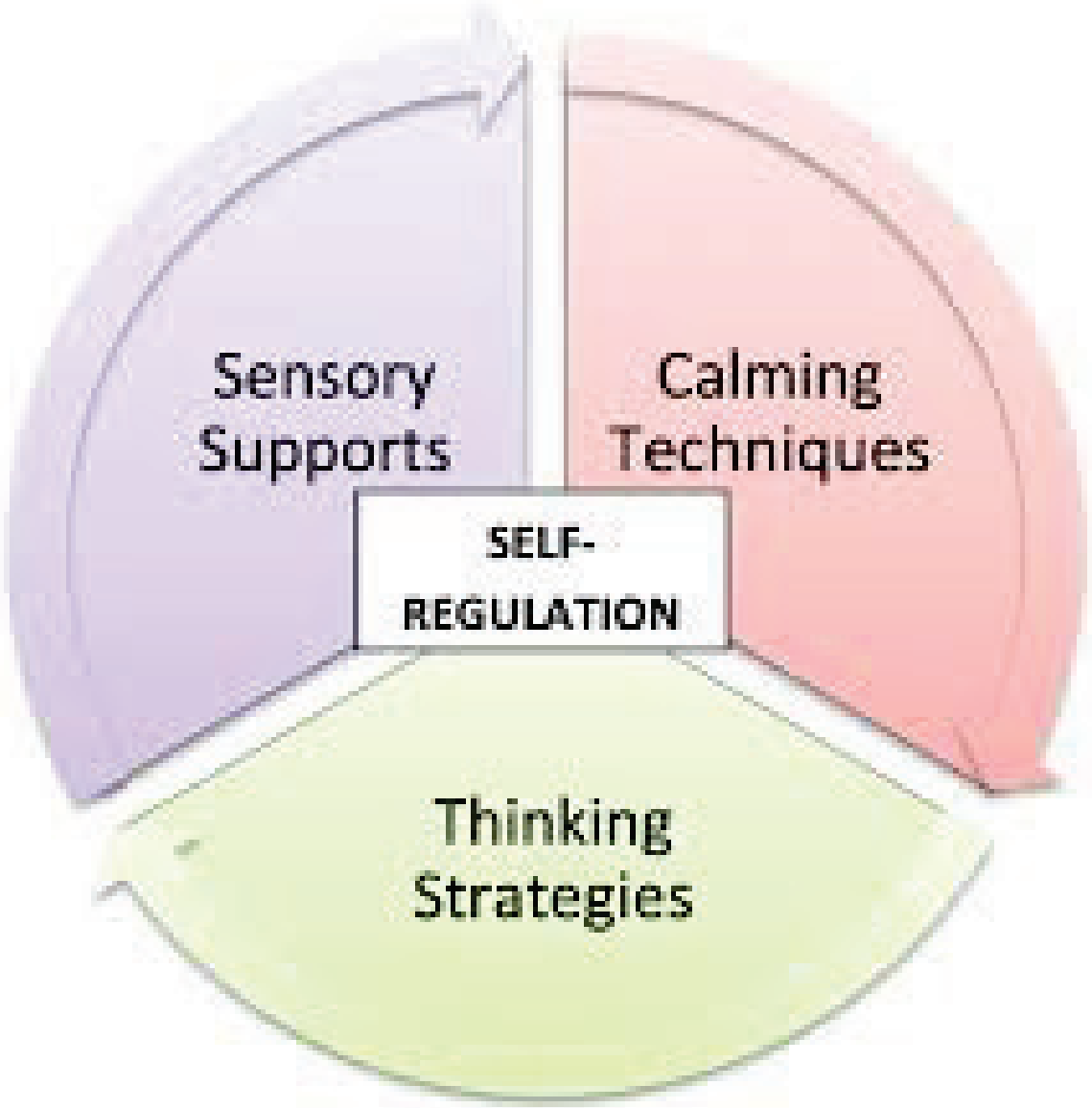
- 41% had the autism diagnosis
- 33% of those were a dual diagnosis
- What does that mean?
  - Complicated sensory and motor systems qualify for the autism diagnosis
  - In some cases there is no way to differentially diagnosis the source of a deficit

Sensory System as is relates to Point of Access

		Sensory and Point of Access				Total	
		Touch Access	Eye Gaze	Head Point Access	Switch Access	Raw	%
Sensory	WNL	65	6	1	1	73	41%
	Decreased level of arousal	2	2	0	1	5	3%
	Seeking	49	1	0	2	52	29%
	Overstimulated	16	7	0	2	25	14%
	Seeking but becomes overstimulated	24	0	0	0	24	13%
Total		156	16	1	6	179	

Sensory and Self Regulation

- 59% report deficits in this area
- What percentage can focus, motor plan, attend, access AAC better with a sensory diet?
- Who addresses and is trained in sensory and self regulation? Occupational Therapists
  - 43% present with sensory seeking behaviors which can look like stimming on the device
  - 47% can be easily over stimulates which should be considered when selecting number of buttons on a screen


Sensory Supports
Calming Techniques
SELF-REGULATION
Thinking Strategies

Deep Pressure / Joint Compression

Other Sensory Considerations

- Auditory Device Accommodations
- Visual Device Accommodations
- Tactile Device Accommodations

Auditory Device Accommodations

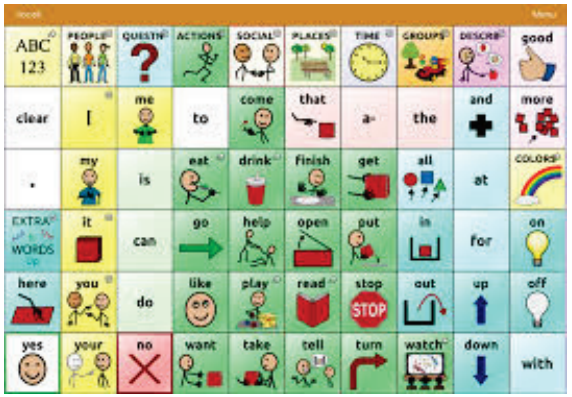
Volume

Activate upon Release

Quick way to silence the device

Visual Device Accommodations

- Red Upon Selection
- Release Time
- Number of icons on the screen



Tactile Device Accommodations

- Keyguards
- Release time

He just won’t sit still.

Strategies

Sensory Strategies

Device Strategies

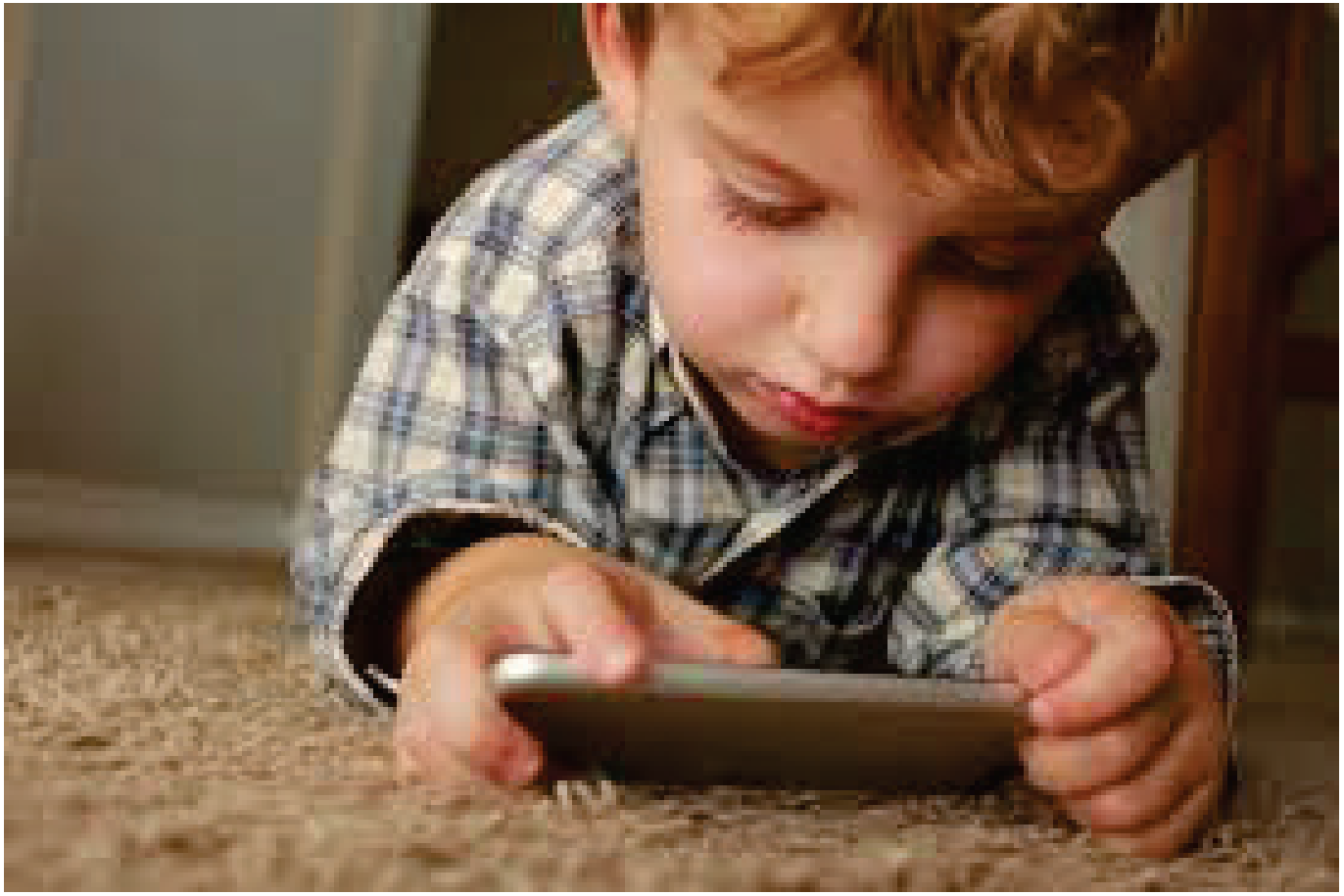
All she will do is stim on the buttons

Strategies

Sensory Strategy

Device Strategy

He only has one topic of interest.



Strategies

Sensory Strategy

Device Strategy

She already talks in scripts.

Strategies

Sensory Strategies

Device Strategies

Presume Receptive Competency!

Presume Expressive Potential!

Don’t be afraid to fail –
trying is success!