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 it relates to Point of Access

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensory</th>
<th>Touch Access</th>
<th>Eye Gaze</th>
<th>Head Point Access</th>
<th>Switch Access</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Raw</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WNL</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased level of arousal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overstimulated</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking but becomes overstimulated</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>156</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>179</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

Calming Joint Compressions
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!