



**PG Behaviour Consulting**  
*Building Life Skills Through Connection*  
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## Including Neurodiverse and Challenging Children in Childcare

Facilitated by Pina Giovannitti  
Behaviour Consultant

## Outline

- Definitions
- Why Punishment, Shaming and Threats don't work
- The importance of Connection
- Triggers and Fight, Flight and Freeze
- Attachment Based Strategies
- ASD and how to support
- ADHD and how to support
- FASD and how to support
- Resources

Questions  
are welcome  
throughout!



## What is Challenging Behaviour?

- ❖ A behaviour that is a problem for someone else
- ❖ All challenging behaviour is a form of conflict between 2 or more people
- ❖ The behaviour is trying to communicate a need
- ❖ The behaviour is an adaptive form of problem solving
- ❖ Children will always behave in a way:
  - that makes sense to them;
  - That gets the fastest result to the solution
- ❖ Challenging behaviour is not intentional. It results from lagging skills, stress or sensory integration difficulties

### Challenging Behaviour

- Occurs when the demand placed on the child's abilities exceed what they are capable of actually doing

### Misbehaviour

- The child is aware that they have a choice in how to behave and they intentionally do something they know they should not do. The child is capable of acting differently



## What does it mean to be Neurodiverse?

**\*Neurodiversity (noun):**

The diversity or variation of cognitive functioning in people. Everyone has a unique brain and therefore different skills, abilities, and needs.

**\*Neurodiverse (adjective):**

Describes the diversity and variation of cognitive functioning in people. Neurodiverse is typically used to describe neurodivergent people.

\*Exceptional Individuals: <https://exceptionalindividuals.com/neurodiversity/>

## Neurodivergent People Can Include

**People with:**

- Autism
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity
- Learning Difficulties like dyslexia
- Motor planning difficulties like writing, running or balance
- Brain injuries which include fetal alcohol spectrum
- Communication difficulties in speech or language or both
- Anxiety



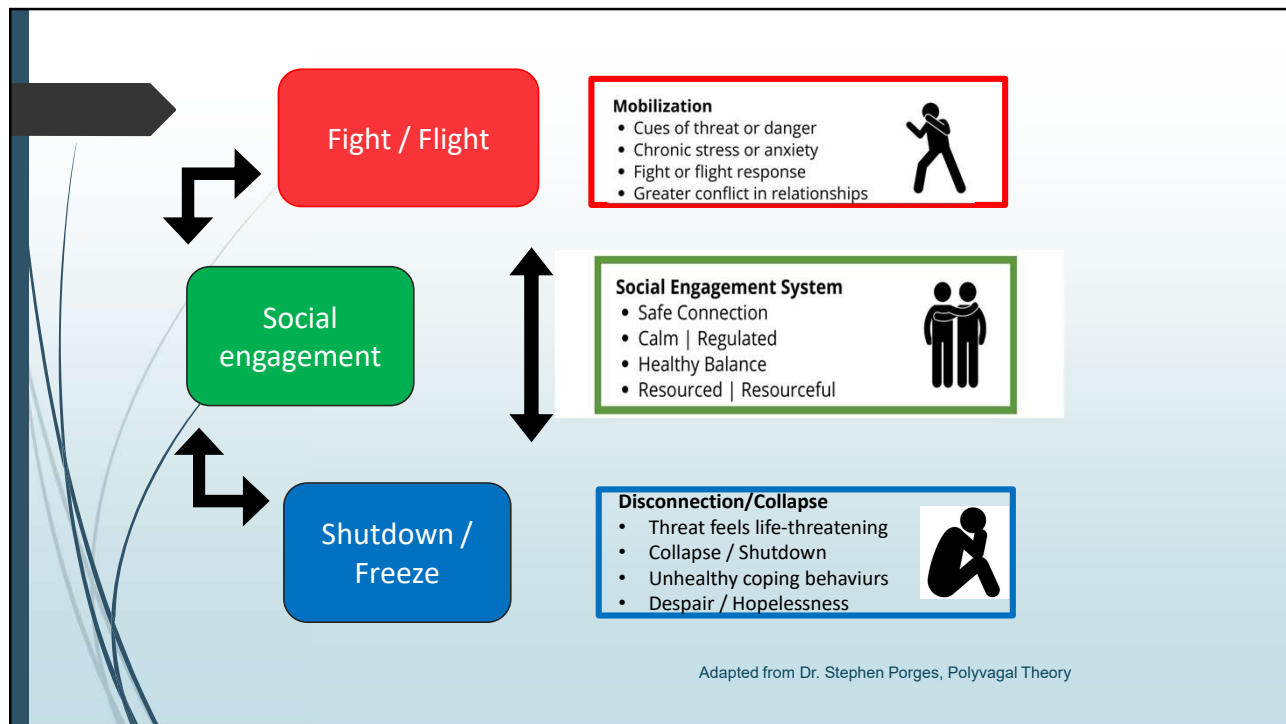
## Punishment, Threats, Shaming Why It Does Not Work



## Neuroscience and Attachment The new vitamin C

“Kids do well if they can.”

Dr. Ross Green



## Attachment Based Strategies

- Build strong relationships by engaging in the following:
  - Empathy
  - Co-Regulation
  - Serve and Return
  - Adjust Demands
  - 4 S's to secure attachment
  - Connect before you redirect



## Empathy

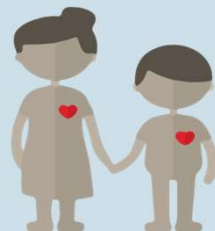
Children only learn how to be empathetic if they have experienced being empathized with.

### How To Implement Empathy

- ❖ Use the child's name or a "you" statement: Pina you are feeling mad. OR You are feeling mad.
- ❖ Validate the feeling: It's ok to be sad. OR It's hard to share your toy, it's ok to be frustrated.
- ❖ Relate to the child: You are having so much fun at the park. I am too. It is hard to leave; let's help each other get ready to go.
- ❖ Explain and Normalize feelings: You feel anxious when mommy is on deployment. It's ok to feel that way. Many military kids feel that way. I'm here for you.
- ❖ You are not trying to solve the problem. You are being present in the moment to help them cope and tolerate the feeling.

## Co-Regulation

A calm nervous system supports a dysregulated one.





## Serve and Return



Serve and Return is the term used for the bonding behaviours caregivers engage in to elicit the attachment instinct in children. Repeated, positive serve and return interactions build a strong and healthy brain foundation.

## Adjust Demands

Demands are what caregivers tell children to do, often using too many words. Conflict arises when the demand or expectation placed on the child is greater than what the child is developmentally able to do. Fuel connection by adjusting your demands in the following ways:

1. Give Warnings
2. One Step Instructions
3. Tell Them What To Do
4. Reduce Waiting
5. Clear and Consistent Routines
6. Eliminate Demands when the child is in fight, flight, or freeze



## 4 S's to Secure Attachment

**Seen**

**Safe**

**Soothed**

**Secure**

Based on the work of Dr. Tina Payne Bryson

## Connect Before You Redirect

Use this strategy when the child is in a Fight or Flight state or is being rigid or non-compliant.

From The Whole-Brain Child by Dr. Daniel J. Siegel and Dr. Tina Payne Bryson





## ASD

Autism Spectrum Disorder, or Autism, is a neurodevelopmental condition that impacts brain development that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them.

When you have met a child with ASD, you have only met one child with ASD.

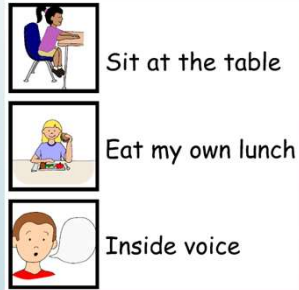
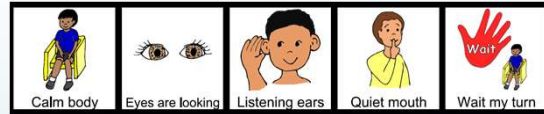
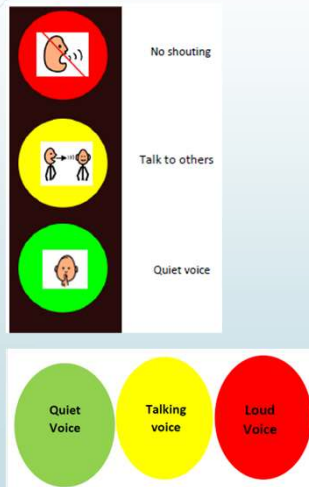
### Support Communication



- ❖ Be at the child's level and gain their attention.
- ❖ Use clear, simple language when communicating.
- ❖ Incorporate visual supports (objects, gestures, pictures, text, sign, etc.).
- ❖ Avoid asking questions.
- ❖ Allow the child time to process information (count to 10 in your head)

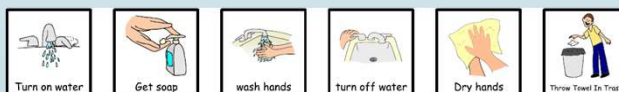


## Visuals Expectations



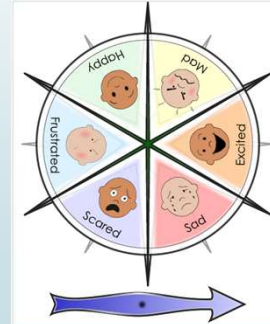
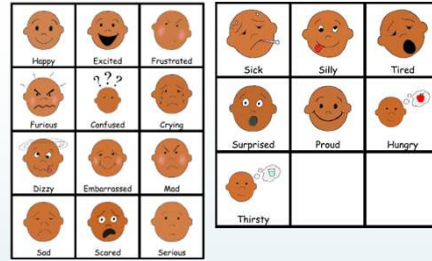
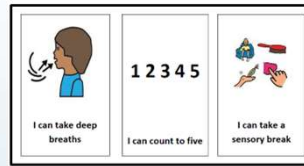
\*Lesson Pix

## Visuals Self Help Skills

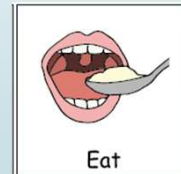
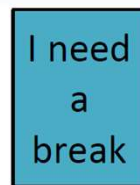




### Visuals Emotions and Self-Regulation



### Visuals Communicate Needs

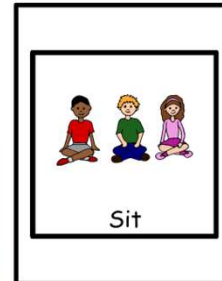




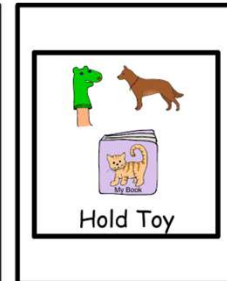
### Visuals Daily Routine



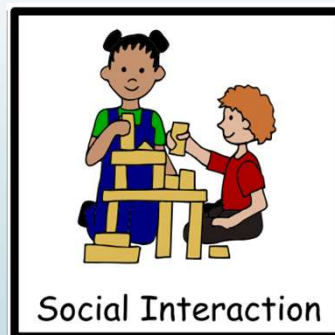
### First



### Then



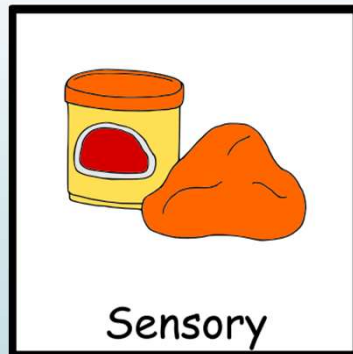
### Support Social Interaction



- Follow the child's lead
- Program to the child's interest and developmental level
- Scaffold interactions between children
- Model
- Script
- Social Scripts

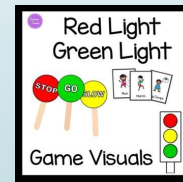


## Support Sensory Needs



- Ensure there is always a variety of sensory materials available inside and outside
- Provide fidgets during quiet time, group time, waiting, at the lunch or snack table
- Provide alternative seating
- Create a calm down space in all environments (classroom, outdoors, gym, field trips)
- Provide movement opportunities
- Provide weighted animals

## Movement Opportunities

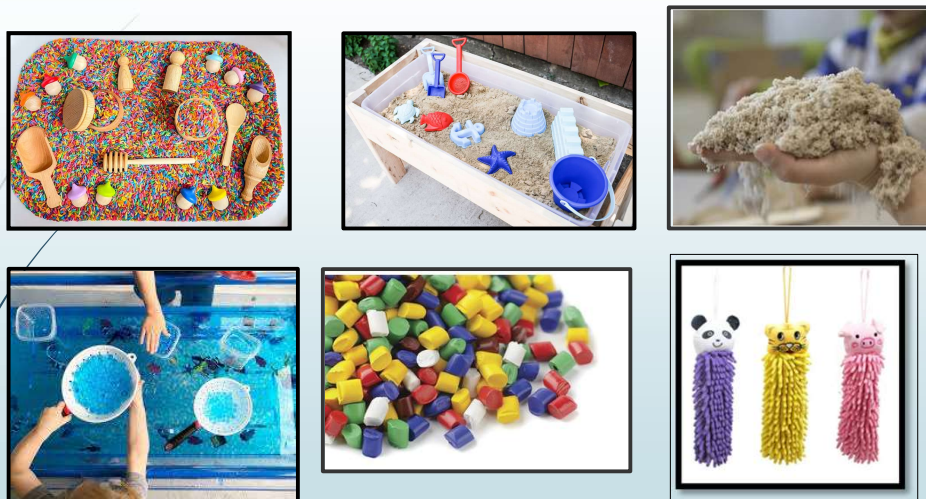




### Alternative Seating



### Variety of Textures



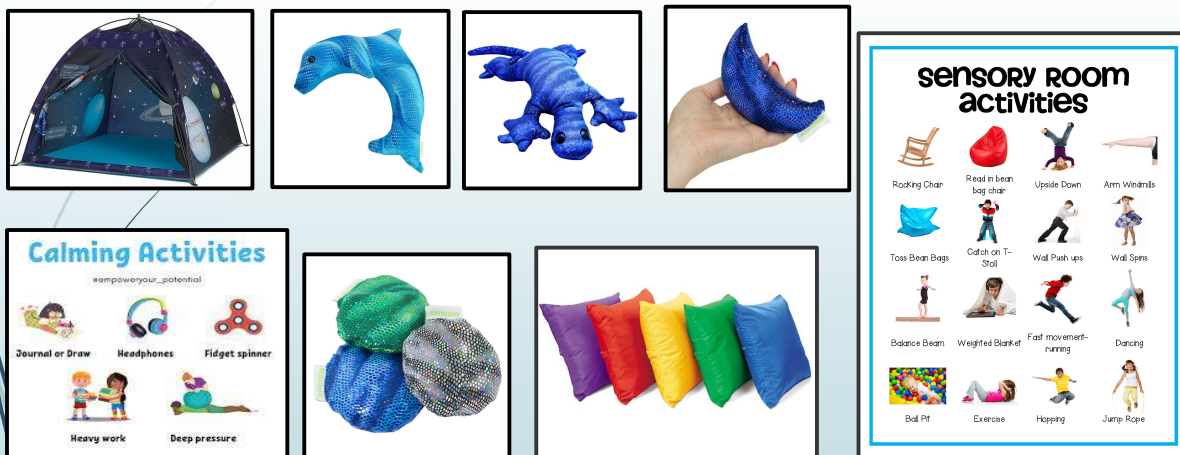




### Fidgets for Hands and Mouth



### Materials for a Calm Down Space





## ADHD

- ADHD is a neurological condition which affects one or more of the following:
  1. Regulation of attention
  2. Regulation of motor activity
  3. Regulation of impulsivity

## Symptoms

### Inattentive Type

- ❖ Fails to give close attention to details
- ❖ Difficulty sustaining attention
- ❖ Does not seem to listen
- ❖ Does not follow through on instructions
- ❖ Difficulty organizing tasks or activities
- ❖ Avoids tasks requiring sustained mental effort
- ❖ Loses things necessary for tasks
- ❖ Easily distracted
- ❖ Forgetful in daily activities

### Hyperactive-Impulsive Type

- ❖ Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat
- ❖ Leaves seat in classroom inappropriately
- ❖ Runs about or climbs excessively
- ❖ Has difficulty playing quietly
- ❖ Is "on the go" or "driven by a motor"
- ❖ Talks excessively
- ❖ Blurts out answers before questions are completed
- ❖ Has difficulty waiting for a turn
- ❖ Interrupts or intrudes on others





## ADHD is not...

- ❖ A behaviour disorder
- ❖ An illness or a disease
- ❖ Only a childhood disorder
- ❖ Due to bad parenting
- ❖ Caused by too much screen time
- ❖ Caused by too much sugar
- ❖ ADHD does not affect intelligence

## A Child with ADHD can...

- ❖ Pay attention or sit still when:
  - There is novelty
  - Doing an activity of high interest
  - Provided with one on one attention
- ❖ Use their energy in a positive way when the motivation is present
- ❖ Be very creative
- ❖ Can learn new skills when taught



## Practical Ways to Support

"A person with ADHD is someone with a Ferrari brain equipped with bicycle brakes...the name of the game is strengthening the brakes."\*

- Skill Development through modeling and coaching
- Mindfulness exercises to reduce anxiety and stress
- Sensory Integration

\* ADHD 2.0, Edward Hallowell and John Ratey, C2022, Random House Publishing Group

## FASD

### To be Inclusive means to Stamp out the Stigma

**FASD is not 100% preventable**

#### **For birth mothers:**

FASD is not caused intentionally by the mother.

- She may be unaware of the pregnancy
- Approximately 50% of pregnancies in Canada are not planned. (Statistics Canada)
- She may be poorly informed of the danger of alcohol use during pregnancy
- Mom may want to stop but finds she can't due to dependency and/or poor supports

#### **For caregivers:**

- They are not bad parents or have bad parenting skills

#### **The person with FASD:**

- Has a permanent brain injury. They need support not stigma



## 8 Key Strategies

1. Use concrete language
2. Minimize changes to the environment
3. Repeat often
4. Have a consistent routine
5. Minimize stimulation: lights, music, talking
6. Give step by step directions
7. Provide good structure (free play does not work well)
8. Provide constant supervision

## One Last Word

- Focus on Connection, Serve and Return, and decreasing Stress
- Always find the strengths of the child and use these to build Self-Regulation, Attention, Social Skills, etc.
- When there is a problem, make a plan. Keep it simple by focusing on one or two goals.
- Encourage families to engage in Mindfulness Activities
- Emphasize that children need to feel safe, seen, soothed and secure. They also need to feel accepted as they are and loved.
- Celebrate with families all the small changes. Remember small changes lead to big changes.
- Educate families so myths can be busted.
- Encourage families to have fun with each other.



“

The reasons for the challenging behaviours often diminish when we are properly addressing the child's physiological and emotional needs. ”

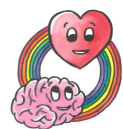
Dr. Mona Delahooke

We are shifting from what we do with children to how we are with children.



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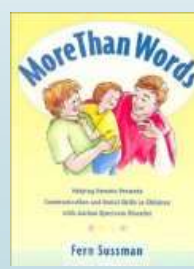
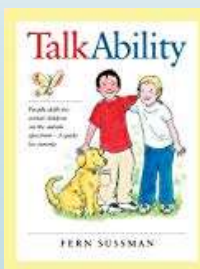
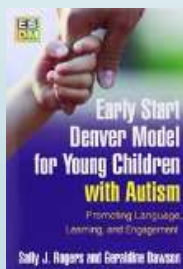
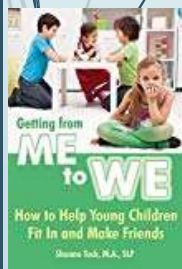
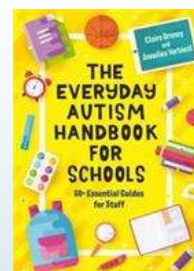
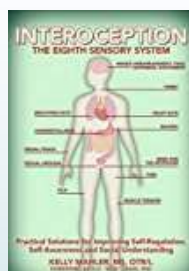
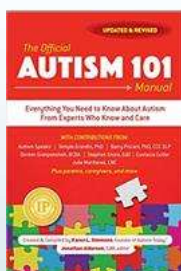
## RESOURCES



## ASD Websites

- Autism Ontario: [www.autismontario.com](http://www.autismontario.com)
- Geneva Centre for Autism: <https://www.autism.net/>
- Autism Canada: [www.autismcanada.org](http://www.autismcanada.org)
- ASO (Asperger's Society of Ontario): <https://www.asontario.org/>
- Autism Awareness Centre Inc.:  
<https://autismawarenesscentre.com/>
- ConnectAbility: <https://connectability.ca/en/>
- Help Autism Now Society: <https://www.helpautismnow.com/>

## ASD Books for Adults





## ASD Books for Children



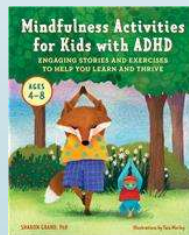
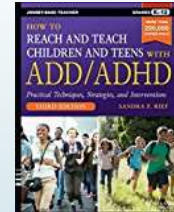
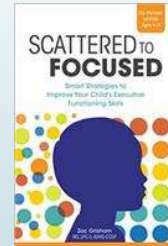
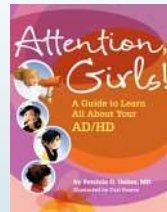
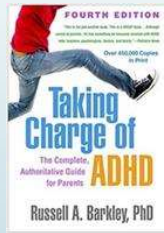
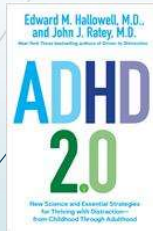
## ADHD Websites

- Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada: <https://caddac.ca/>

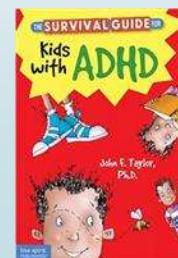
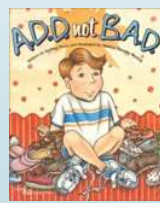
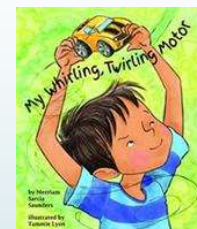
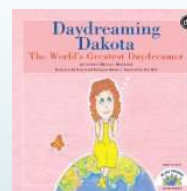
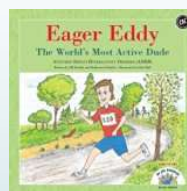
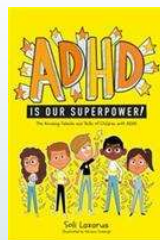
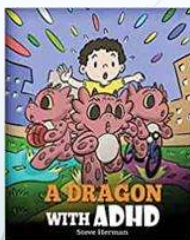




## ADHD Books for Adults



## ADHD Books for Children





## Sensory Processing Differences Websites

- A Sensory Life: <https://asensorylife.com/index.html>
- Star Institute (go to the resource tab): <https://sensoryhealth.org/>
- Theravive: is a network of licensed therapists helping to connect people throughout the US and Canada to find the right professional who can help them: [www.theravive.com](http://www.theravive.com)
- Short Videos that explain how to use sensory tools can be found at Centre For Autism Middletown/ Sensory Processing Resource: <https://sensory-processing.middletownautism.com/resources/>
- Main site: <https://sensory-processing.middletownautism.com/>

## Sensory Tools

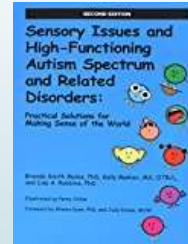
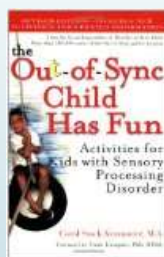
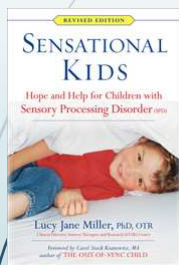
You can purchase sensory tools here:

- FDMT, <https://www.fdmtd.ca/en/new> , shop oral motor and sensory, Canadian
- FDMT, <https://www.fdmtd.ca/en/new> , Canadian
- School Specialty Flaghouse, <https://www.schoolspecialty.ca/>, American with office in Canada
- Louise Kook & Galt, <https://louisekool.com/>, Canadian

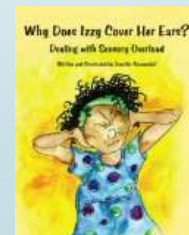
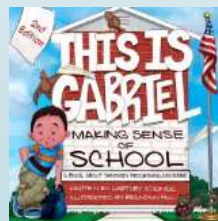
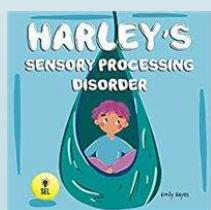
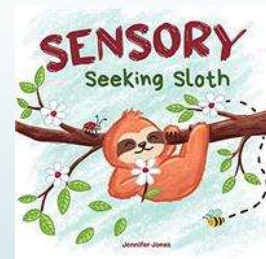
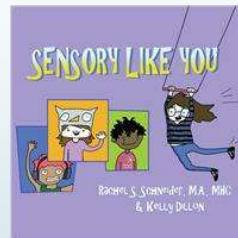
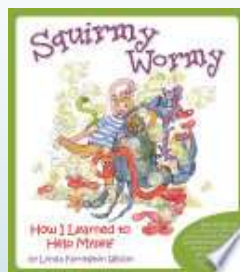
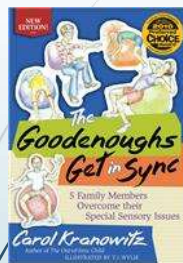




## Sensory Books for Adults



## Sensory Books for Children





## FASD Websites

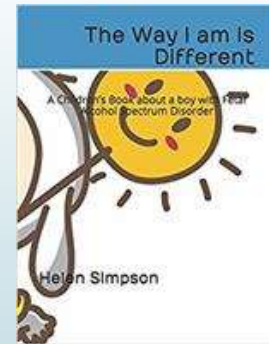
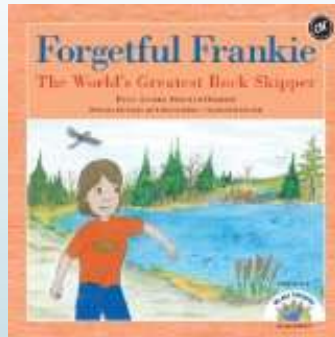
- CanFASD: Canada FASD Research Network: <https://canfasd.ca/>
- PACE model, Dr. Dan Hughes: <https://ddpnetwork.org/about-ddp/meant-pace/>
- Government of Ontario, FASD programs and services: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-fasd-programs-and-services>
- FASD Ontario: <https://www.fasdinotsaf.ca/en/>
- Adopt4Life, Ontario's adoptive parent association: <http://www.adopt4life.com/>

## FASD Books for Adults





## FASD Books for Children



## Additional Resources

- Ross Greene: Consequences: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Day3yy5Eyaw>
- Lives in the Balance (Ross Greene's website): <https://livesinthebalance.org/>
- Child Development Core Story, Part 1: Brain Architecture (5:48): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SpqLzFew9bs&t=1s>
- Child Development Core Story, Part 2: Serve and Return (4:53): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0\\_Y7jSGnp8&t=2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0_Y7jSGnp8&t=2s)
- Child Development Core Story, Part 3: Stress (5:30): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kivv2BJhzbA>
- Child Development Core Story, Part 4: Pay Now or Pay Later (3:25): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20DdwzhMTTA>



## Additional Books

