



CONTACT:
Susan Slater, Public Relations Coordinator
Columbus Speech & Hearing Center
614.261.5417 direct line
sslater@columbusspeech.org

April is Occupational Therapy Month

What is sensory processing?

Columbus, OH - April 2010 - Most of us don't give sensory awareness a second thought. Our ability to integrate our senses into everyday activities developed with us as children. We easily adapt incoming sensations of touch, movement, sound, and vision without thought. For some, however, this natural ability does not develop as efficiently as it should. These individuals have what is known as Dysfunction of Sensory Integration (DSI) sometimes called Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD). The Occupational Therapists at Columbus Speech & Hearing Center are well-acquainted with this complex disorder of the brain.

Common signs and symptoms of DSI/SPD are varied and different for each individual, but may include under- or over-responsiveness to sensory input and difficulty with motor coordination. Young children who are "over-responders" may be so sensitive to touch, light, sounds or movements that they avoid or they may experience a "melt-down" with typical kid activities such as having their hair cut, finger painting, or being on a swing. For those who under-respond, they may appear to be in constant motion and not seem to notice when you call their name or if they have messy hands.

For those school-age, more common signs and symptoms include difficulty with handwriting, using scissors, learning to tie shoes, or they may be easily distracted and have a poor attention span. Many children diagnosed with ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorders also have DSI/SPD, while many individuals with this disorder may have no diagnosis at all.

According to Ann Ramsey, OTR/L, Occupational Therapy Program Coordinator of Columbus Speech & Hearing Center, "DSI/SPD is not well known, but is more common than people think. There are many families that their child can be helped. As many as 15 percent of children suffer from the disorder. Many times," Ramsey adds, "sensory processing disorder is at the root of a child's developmental or behavior issues. It is not only frustrating for the child, but for parents who are trying to help them as well."

Ramsey says Columbus Speech & Hearing Center is equipped to help children through comprehensive evaluation and weekly treatment sessions which include

helping the individual to improve their ability to process sensory input as well as helping the family to cope.

Since April is Occupational Therapy Month, it's the perfect time to inquire about OT services or to speak with a professional about DSI/SPD. Call the Center at 614-263-5151.

Columbus Speech & Hearing Center, founded in 1923, is a non-profit United Way organization serving over 10,000 people annually. Services include hearing evaluations, hearing aids, speech therapy for children and adults, occupational therapy and treatment, and vocational services for the Hard-of-Hearing, Deaf and Deaf-Blind through the Comprehensive Program for the Deaf and Ohio Deaf-Blind Outreach Program. Generous charitable giving from the community help offset the cost of the Center's valued services for low-income families. For more information, www.columbusspeech.org.