

# MAKING SENSE OF YOUR SENSES

*A Workbook for Children with Sensory Processing Disorder*

CHRISTOPHER R. AUER, MA & MICHELLE M. AUER, MS, OTR

## About the Authors

**Christopher R. Auer, MA,** is the disabilities and mental health administrator for the Head Start program in the Denver Mayor's Office for Education and Children. He is also affiliate faculty at Regis University and coauthor of *Parenting a Child with Sensory Processing Disorder*. He is a regular presenter at national conferences.

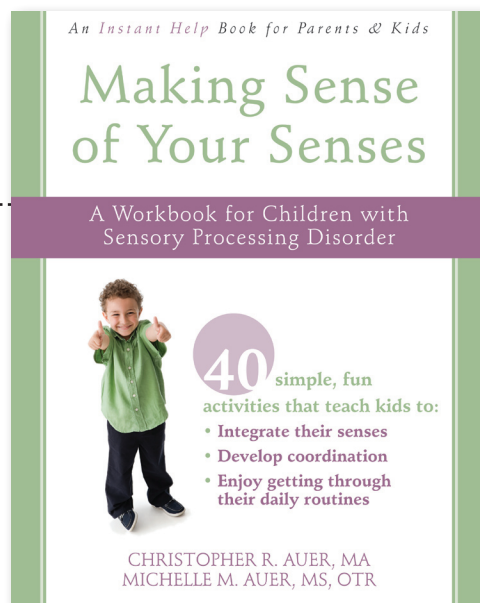
**Michelle M. Auer, MS, OTR,** is an occupational therapist for a school district in the Denver area. She also maintains a private practice providing hippotherapy for children.

Imagine if a light touch from a family member or friend aroused panic, or a hard punch stimulated no response at all. Our

ability to make sense of sensory information through touching, tasting, smelling, hearing, and seeing is what makes each of us unique, allows us to learn, to avoid hazards, and to experience pleasure. These extreme responses, or lack of responses, can be symptoms of sensory processing disorder (SPD), a disorder which affects five to ten percent of the general population, including many children with autism, ADHD, Fragile X syndrome, and other developmental conditions. For kids with SPD, simply getting through the school day can be a significant challenge. Many of them say that they have a hard time sitting or writing, or that they need more space. Others feel that they need to squeeze something, stretch, or move around in order to pay attention.

From the unique perspective of parents of a child with SPD, Christopher and Michelle Auer have written *Making Sense of Your Senses, A Workbook for Children with Sensory Processing Disorder*.

As experts in SPD treatment and counseling, the Auers know from both personal and professional experience how to help develop awareness in children with sensory processing disorder, and how to help them better understand and cope with it in healthy ways both at home and at school. By learning how they respond to different senses, mastering self-calming techniques, learning organizational methods, and adopting strategies to cope with brothers and sisters, children with SPD can learn life-long mindfulness skills and most importantly, enjoy being a kid.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

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A WORKBOOK FOR CHILDREN WITH SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER

Christopher R. Auer, MA & Michelle M. Auer, MS, OTR

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# MAKING SENSE OF YOUR SENSES

*A Workbook for Children with Sensory Processing Disorder*

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## Praise

*"This entertaining and practical workbook encourages children to follow their natural urge to explore and experiment in order to discover how they experience their world through their senses and to master the feelings that result. As they work on the exercises with their children, parents will find that they understand their children in new ways and perhaps themselves as well. In our too loud, too bright, too hurried world, understanding our sensory responses and learning to protect ourselves from overstimulation are important skills for children with special sensory processing challenges, and for the rest of us too."*

— Joshua Sparrow, MD,  
Brazelton Touchpoints  
Center, Children's Hospital,  
Harvard Medical School

## Tips for Parents of Children with SPD

### Cook with your children.

The work of stirring, mixing and kneading bread or other food can be calming for your child. As you cook together, you can learn what foods your child likes and doesn't like. Experiment with different ingredients to find out what foods your child likes to smell, touch and taste. This time can also be a good opportunity to talk about nutrition, and let your child be creative.

### Take walks together in nature.

Walking in natural light and clean air is a great way to ease stress for adults and children. A great activity is to have children search for interesting leaves or rocks for a later craft project. When looking for things in nature, children will need to bend over, use their fingers to pick things up, and perhaps walk over steps or other obstacles, they will develop balance, coordination, and calm their senses. The exercise can help children be more relaxed, and be better able to cope with stress.

### Clean and decorate your home.

Heavy work such as vacuuming, dusting, wiping or carrying laundry can help calm your child's sensory system. A cleaner house also helps everyone feel more organized, which can reduce stress. Children may also like to make potpourri or experiment with different scents to see which are calming.

### Make a calm-down space.

Help your child find pillows, blankets, or a bean bag to make a cozy area in their room or a quiet area of the house. Allow your child to select some calming music on a player and sit together and relax. When things get stressful, you both have a place to escape.

### Shop during off-peak hours.

If you have to shop with your child, try to go during the middle of the week during off-peak hours when stores aren't as crowded. Less noise and smaller crowds will make it easier for you to talk with your child and build your relationship.

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