Exploring the patterns of sensory processing in a population of children with substantiated child abuse

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Take Two provides a range of therapeutic services to children in the child protection system, aged 0-18 years living in Victoria who have experienced significant developmental trauma.

Children who have experienced significant ongoing abuse and trauma are particularly vulnerable to the development of maladaptive self-regulatory strategies negatively impacting their capacity to heal and to develop relationships with others.

Understanding the sensory needs of our clients, guides regulatory interventions, facilitating greater occupational engagement.

**Findings**

Female toddlers (0-3 years) responded more to visual experiences compared with males of the same age ($p = .02$).

Male children ($p = .02$) aged 4-7 years, required greater sensory input before responding, and scored higher ($p = .03$) on the overactivity and scholastic/language (0.03) scales of the HoNOSCA.

Aboriginal children required less sensory input to trigger a response.

Older children (7-11 years) were more likely ($p = .006$) to demonstrate the need for greater sensory input through the use of their body, such as draping over furniture or becoming tired easily.

Children aged 7 months to 7.10 years ($n = 52$) were assessed using the carer rated Sensory Profile (Dunn 2014), between Feb 2016 - March 2017.

75% children in foster care
23% children identified as ATSI

**What next?**

Further exploration of sensory processing patterns and links with early experiences.
Evaluate sensory interventions and their relationship to children’s engagement in meaningful occupations.

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Research funded by a Forest Hill Grant from the Foundation of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies.