



SUPPORTING SENSORY-SENSITIVE CHILDREN IN A SENSORY-INTENSIVE WORLD

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[Editors' note: This is the first in a series of articles examining the role of sensory integration in early childhood.]

In 21st-century America, every public school system has the ability to identify, assess, and diagnose special needs in young children, as well as provide early intervention programs to support those needs. It would seem that we—educators and parents—should have this routine down. My child isn't thriving: I consult my pediatrician, seek input from my early learning teachers and caregivers, have my child assessed by the proper professionals in partnership with home, school, and clinical environments, identify the problem, and get help. Simple? No. Ten years after I first wrote in *Montessori Life* about the challenges of identifying, diagnosing, and treating sensory processing disorder (SPD) in young children ["Making Sense of Every Child," Volume 18, Number 4, 2006], many of the same difficulties remain. The good news is that more people know about sensory integration (SI) and SPD than ever before.

The bad news? Little has been done to integrate the information we have learned into most children's early lives. During this decade, most American schools have