

PAW[®] PRINT

Z-Vibe by Ark's Therapeutic



Ark's Z-Vibe is a new vibratory tool. Mainly used for oral motor stimulation and sensory input, it can also be used outside the mouth on the cheeks, lips and neck. The Z-Vibe provides a

Issue: 2

February, 2008

Welcome to the second edition of *Pawprint*, Southpaw's monthly e-newsletter designed to share information throughout the SI community. We'd like to thank everyone for the great feedback we received after the first edition. We are striving to make the newsletter as interactive as possible and have many exciting updates coming in the near future, so stay tuned!



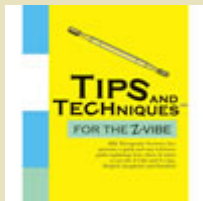
Make sure to visit us online at www.southpawenterprises.com.

Survey of the Month

vast range of sensory stimulation, although it is only the size of a ball point pen!

[More Info](#)

Tips and Techniques for the Z-Vibe



Tips & Techniques is a quick and easy reference guide explaining how, when, and where to use the Z-Vibe and its tips.

[More Info](#)

Jump and Play Island



Encourage group participation, stimulate spatial awareness, and provide vestibular and proprioceptive input.

Stimulate hand-eye coordination by using the hole in the top as a target for beanbags or balls. The Jump & Play Island can easily accommodate four children at once, and has a working load of 350 pounds.

[More Info](#)

Bean Bag Chair

This month we are giving away another \$100 Southpaw gift certificate to one lucky reader who participates in our survey. Please complete the survey by February 29th. We will announce the winner in next month's edition of *Pawprint*.

Congratulations to Stefanie Willard of [Helping Hands Pediatric Therapy](#) in Buford, Georgia who won the \$100 Southpaw gift certificate for participating in January's Survey of the Month. We'd like to thank everyone who took time to answer the questions.

Click [here](#) to take the survey.

Therapist Forum

Mouths Need Sensory Input Too!

Kathleen E. Morris, MS, CC/SLP

Did you know a variety of sensory-based challenges could be addressed with some very simple strategies that are easily available to parents and teachers, as well as professionals? Often such issues as attention/focusing, modulation (calming/alerting), eating and also communication skills can be modified using oral-motor intervention. A variety of oral-motor items can be made easily accessible for home, school and even travel with very little expense or space requirements.



Activities that include chewing, blowing, sucking and vibration can have a powerful impact on a child's (and also adult's) ability to better handle their environment. Some of us need help from time to time with calming or alerting to be able to stay focused and give us a better opportunity to attend to the task at hand. Children struggling with picky or limited eating habits may need to have input before expected to ingest food. Oral-motor activities may also exercise the jaw, tongue and lip muscles for improving speech production.

Speech pathologists are often aware of when a child may need something introduced to the oral cavity, but many OTs and PTs have learned the benefits of such intervention as well. Giving a child something to chew during a therapy session may help improve their success. Allowing them an opportunity to do some sucking and/or blowing activities initially can better prepare them for success in their sessions. Introducing vibration to lips, teeth and gums will often facilitate a child's willingness to endure a feeding session. Using oral-motor intervention may improve a child's performance during a handwriting session. However, different strategies work for different individual nervous systems. So it's a good idea to have several options to offer a child. For instance, over the last few years much has been written about the benefit of letting children chew gum while doing their class work, homework especially any handwritten task. What the articles do not mention is the fact that merely offering a child a piece of gum may not make much difference. Some children need such an intense amount of input, that it may be necessary for them to chew 3-5 pieces of gum before meeting their individual oral-motor needs.

When it comes to assisting your own child at home, there are few



Offer students and clients an alternative seating option to a desk and chair for reading or quiet tasks.

Southpaw Bean Bag Chairs offer children a cozy place so they can concentrate on their tasks rather than on their body position.

[More Info](#)

Tumbling Mats



Southpaw's Tumbling mats are our highest durability mats, and they provide superior shock absorbency.

Designed with competitive gymnastics in mind this mat is most ideal for high-impact use but is more firm than the cushioning mats.

[More Info](#)

Portable Itinerant Frame



Using the lightest, strongest material

limitations as to how and when you address oral-motor needs. So be flexible and patient when exploring new options for your child. One great form of input is sucking with a straw. A good rule of thumb is to remember that the thinner the straw and the thicker the substance the more intense oral-motor "workout" your child will receive. Therefore at home it's easy to provide a good thick milkshake or perhaps a thick fruit smoothie. Taking a "bubble-blowing break" can be fit easily into a home routine such as during bath time while everything is already wet and bubbly. At home you can easily control the "resistive/chewy" snacks that offer some good input, such as a Tootsie Roll, Fruit Rollups, Laffy Taffy and their toothbrush is nearby. Use a vibrating toothbrush and you've got additional oral input!

At school it may seem that it can get really tricky for teachers, but it doesn't have to be overwhelming. First of all, teachers don't have to spend time trying to figure out who needs sensory input or who needs what kind. Just having something available for everyone is helpful, because everyone can benefit from sensory input throughout the day. That can mean just having a simple basket of pretzels, goldfish crackers or something sour that children can access at will. Always try to keep some of the tumble-proof bubble-blowing containers available. Encourage parents to send their child to school with a sports bottle (straw-attached type) where each child can keep a drink of water at their desk and utilize sucking input.

Fortunately, sucking, blowing and chewing activities do not have to always involve food. There are a number of products available that are made just for such input. One look at a Southpaw catalog or their online store under the oral-motor section will help you find several options. Starting as early as infancy with the [Baby Grabber](#) a child can have assistance with soothing. They also have a number of different [Chewy Tubes](#) that come scented and unscented, with a variety of shapes and textures. You'll find [whistles](#) and [blow toys](#) designed to intrigue children along with specially designed eating utensils. And children really love Jigglers with low intensity vibration coupled with fun animal heads made for chewing.

One of the rewards in offering children these oral-motor opportunities is that it can help eliminate nasty, wet shirt collars, gooey twisted hair in their mouth, or the ever present gnawed pencil or eraser. Children innately know that something in their mouth is going to help them get through the task at hand. Let's provide more acceptable and fun options for us all.

Kathleen Morris, MS, CCC/SLP has been a speech-language pathologist for 30 years and has had two S.I. clinics in Dallas, TX. She is the creator/publisher of S.I. Focus Magazine, written for parents and professionals. Check out S.I. Focus Magazine at: www.SIfocus.com for a free electronic version sent to you e-mail her at: editor@SIfocus.com.

Ask the Expert

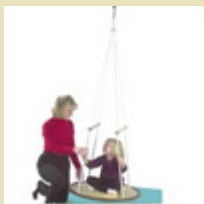
J.H. asks: *My child displays many of the symptoms and behaviors of sensory integration dysfunction (DSI). Where do I go for help?*

Answer:

available, our Itinerant (ITN) Frame will fit in almost any area giving "on the go" therapists the first real portable suspension system on the market. Comes complete with a built-in safety rotational device.

[More Info](#)

Itinerant Platform Swing



The traveling therapist now has more options with our Itinerant Platform swing. Designed to fit the portable ITN Frame, this lightweight swing weighs only 11 lbs., is only 30" in diameter and comes with it's own carrying case.

[More Info](#)

You can start by looking for an Occupational Therapist (OT) who works in pediatrics, preferably with sensory integration dysfunction (DSI) experience. Look in your local phone book, or call the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) for a list of OTs in your area: 1-800-377-8555 or visit www.aota.org.

Be advised that many insurance companies require a referral for OT services, so check with your provider. Also, DSI treatment is not always covered by insurance. If you haven't already, read as much about DSI that you can find. Two great books are [SI and the Child](#) by A. Jean Ayres and [The Out-Of-Sync-Child](#) by Carol Stock Kranowitz.

R.D. asks: *What is the Sensory Integration and Praxis Test (SIPT)?*

Answer:

The SIPT is a standardized test used to help identify difficulties in various areas of sensory processing and functioning. It the only measure of its kind aimed specifically at the different areas related to sensory integrative dysfunction. The test is designed to test children between the ages of 4.0 years/months to 8.11 years/months. The test consists of 17 different standardized subtests and is administered in 2 to 3 two-hour sessions. The SIPT is a fairly expensive test, not usually covered by insurance providers. The only providers who are qualified to administer the test must be SIPT certified. SIPT certification does not address any treatment planning nor treatment strategies. SIPT certification implies only the ability to administer, score and interpret the results of this specific test. SIPT certification, although a helpful compliment, is not necessary for an occupational therapist to be able to successfully treat DSI.

Upcoming Events

Don't forget to visit Southpaw's booth at AOTA's [88th Annual Conference and Expo](#) in Long Beach, CA from April 10th - 12th.