

Care and Feeding of Sensual Overexcitability

Sight/Visual	
Feed	Protect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely to remember what they see and read • A picture is worth a thousand words • Display things of beauty and complexity • Girls are especially responsive to natural vistas • Picture books are not just for kids! e.g. Illustrated Classics, Eyewitness Books, Usborne Books, History of US • Videos, streaming video, clip art • Graphic organizers • Fish & colorful birds as classroom pets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clutter, asymmetry, uneven pictures will agitate • Beware of mismatch between your words and your expression • Perfectionism • Movement distracts • Anticipate strong reactions to art, dance, images • Offer "visually quiet" spot • Study carrels to prevent distractions • Starving is abusive
Touch/Tactile	
Feed	Protect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Channels open when they can touch something or when they are physically comfortable • Allow soft-touch, soothing items, like “beanie babies,” koosh balls, smooth stones, pillows, silky scarves • Hug, pat, shake hands – find a way that you feel comfortable touching your students • Help students to touch others – and themselves - in socially-acceptable ways • Gerbils and other fuzzy rodents as classroom pets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniforms or uncomfortable clothes ARE as annoying as the wearer claims that they are • Sensitivity to writing instruments is REAL – frequent pencil sharpening may not be procrastinating • Desks and chairs should fit and allow movement • Teach respectful “fiddling” • Hands in pockets may feel secure • Proprioception “completes a circuit” – weighted vests, wristbands, hats • Hangnails may be high drama • May recoil from touch • Sitting too near another • Disdains getting messy – or revels in it • Crowds overload – e.g. changing classes, school assemblies

Hearing/Auditory	
Feed	Protect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely to remember what they hear or what they themselves say • Discussions can clinch understanding • Be expressive with intonations, pitch, accents • Radio shows, books on tape, talk shows • Background music with 60 beats per minute, or classical music may improve focus • Soothing white noise may mask distracting sounds of traffic, air conditioners, elevators, etc. • Pleasure in alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhythm, rhyme • Ear for grammar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It may not be internalized until it is vocalized • Discordant music may cause a physical reaction • Provide a quiet spot, noise-reduction headphones, FM system • May hear HOW you say it even more clearly than the overt content • Sensitive to bad acoustics. Preferential seating, softening of hard surfaces may help • Foot-tappers and gum-poppers beware their wrath! • Free-for-all discussions are no fun • Cannot concentrate with auditory distraction • Update fluorescent ballasts or switch to incandescent – or natural light
Taste & Smell/Oral & Olfactory	
Feed	Protect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something in the mouth or a pleasant smell can open channels • Fresh air helps: keep air moving, window open a crack, or have the fan on • Provide pleasant smells like beeswax, eucalyptus, mint, basil, citrus, cinnamon – in chooseable quantity • Chewing gum and cigarettes link tactile with oral for increased attentiveness • Cook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't overwhelm with perfumes, candles, incense – be sensitive to a little going a long way • Mildew, smoke, cleaning products, and other unpleasant smells are distracting • Olfactory gateway to allergies & asthma: extremely common in highly gifted • May overeat OR be picky eaters • Find acceptable chewies – may consume pencils and shirt collars