

Sensory Processing Intervention: A Primer

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Sensory Over-Responsivity

Hyper-sensitivity to sensations e.g. sights, sounds, touch, movement, smells, taste

Bothered by:

- Smells in a restaurant
- Being touched unexpectedly
- Being in a car or up high
- Loud unexpected sounds
- Having hair cut or brushed

Behaviours:

- Classic dysregulated “fussy” baby
- Irritability or aggression “fight or flight”
- Upset by transitions and changes



Sensory Avoidant

Sensory Avoidant Behaviours

- ❑ Seemingly aware of their sensory needs
- ❑ Actively avoid sensory input
- ❑ Protect themselves from over-stimulation
- ❑ Often able to modulate their own arousal
- ❑ Their attention is hyper-vigilant
- ❑ They are often fearful and anxious
- ❑ Frequently described as controlling



Sensory Under-Responsive

- Doesn't cry when seriously hurt
- Doesn't seem to notice when touched
- Nearly always prefers sedentary activities
- Can be unaware of the need to use the toilet
- Passive, quiet, withdrawn
- Often gets lost in his own fantasy world
- Exhibits no inner drive to get involved in the world



Sensory Seeking/Craving Behaviours

- ❑ Is on the move constantly
- ❑ Likes crashing, bashing, bumping, and rough-housing
- ❑ Excessive spinning, swinging or rolling
- ❑ Constantly touches objects and/or intrudes on people
- ❑ Hard to stop talking; trouble turn-taking in conversation
- ❑ Seeks vibration; watches spinning objects

Behaviours:

- ❑ Constantly wants control over every situation
- ❑ Does not wait turn, interrupts constantly
- ❑ Frequently labeled "bad" and "disruptive"
- ❑ Often discharged from schools if behaviour is intense enough



Tactile Defensiveness

- Reacts negatively and emotionally to light touch; anxiety hostility or aggression.
- Dislikes messy play
- Irritated by certain textures of clothing
- Gags on particular foods
- Walk on tiptoe to minimize contact with the ground



Fearful of Movement and Space

- Irrational fear of movement and heights
- Anxious when feet leave the ground
- Feels threatened when upside down
- Dislikes swings or playground equipment



Auditory Sensitivity

- Overly sensitive to sounds
- Fearful of appliances such as vacuum cleaners or hair dryers
- Difficulties with decoding some speech sounds

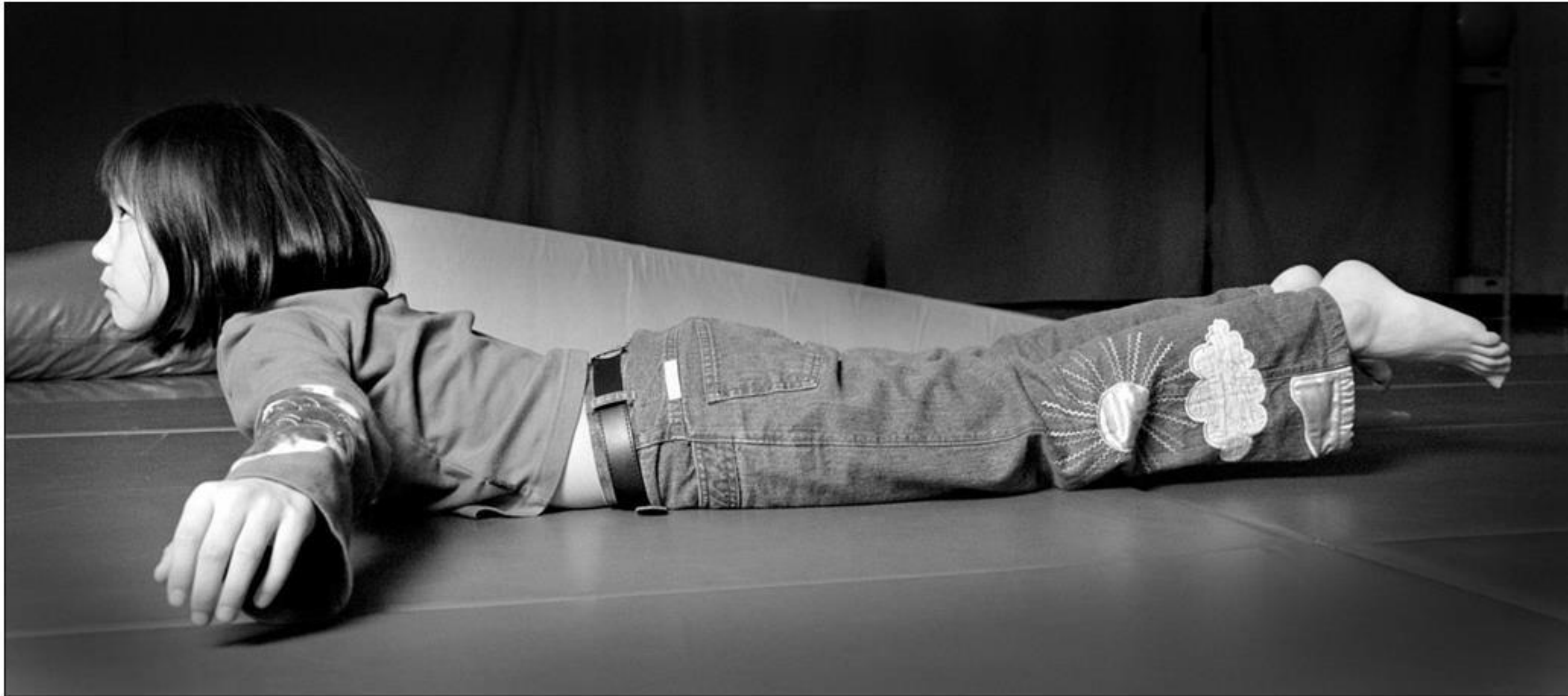


Visual Sensitivity

- Squints in sunlight
- Avoids eye contact
- Dislikes glare from TVs or computers



Sensory Based Motor Dysfunction



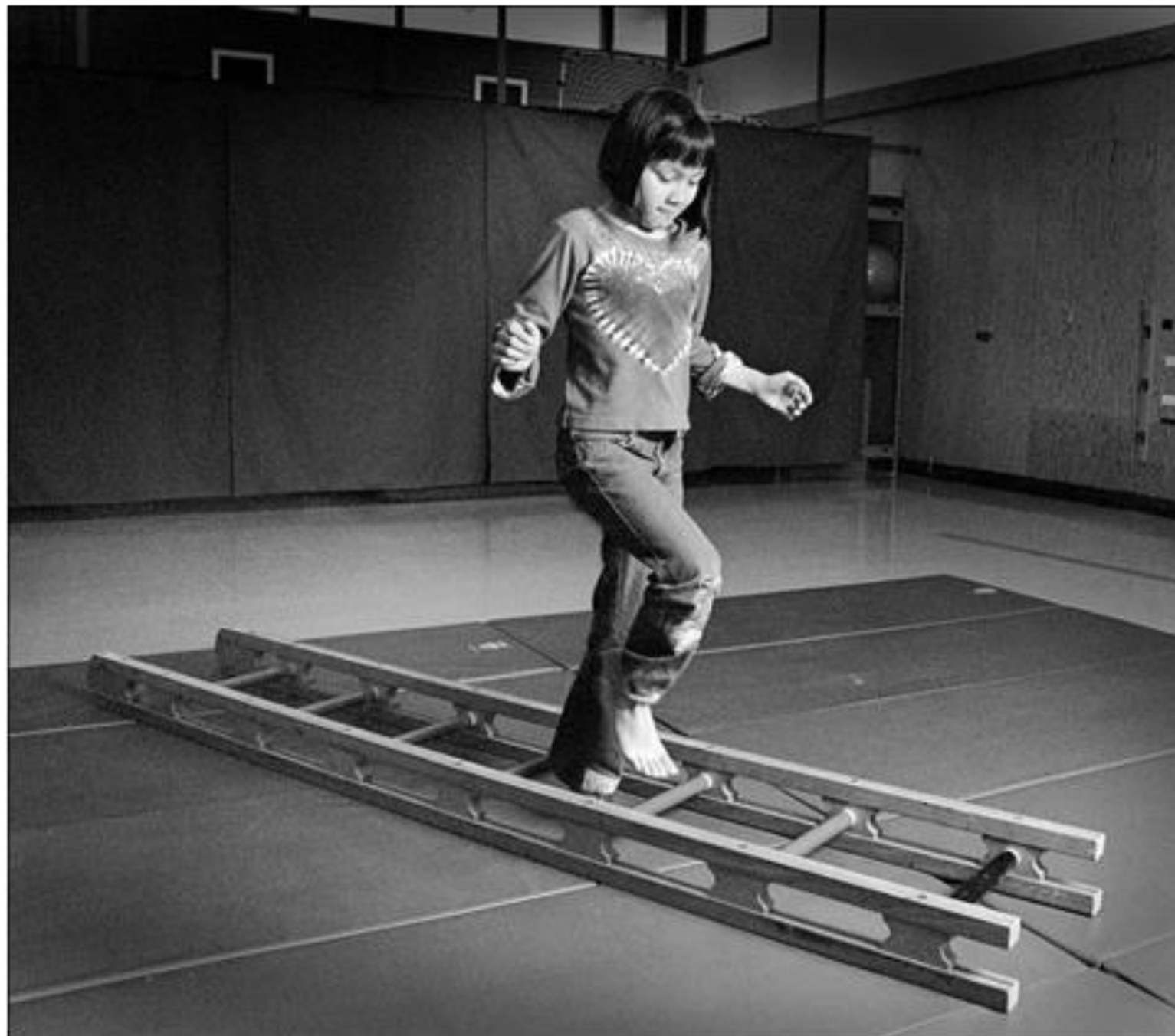
Motor Planning

- Figuring out how to do it
- Bridge between ideation and execution
- Based on body scheme
- Choosing a strategy to accomplish task
- Sequencing a series of actions



Dyspraxia

Inability to conceptualize, plan, program, remember or execute a motor skill.



Children with dyspraxia have difficulty translating sensory information into physical movement, unfamiliar movements, or movements with multiple steps, such as planning how to move through a crowded classroom.

Bilateral Integration and Sequencing



Primary deficits in vestibular, proprioceptive and visual integration deficits.

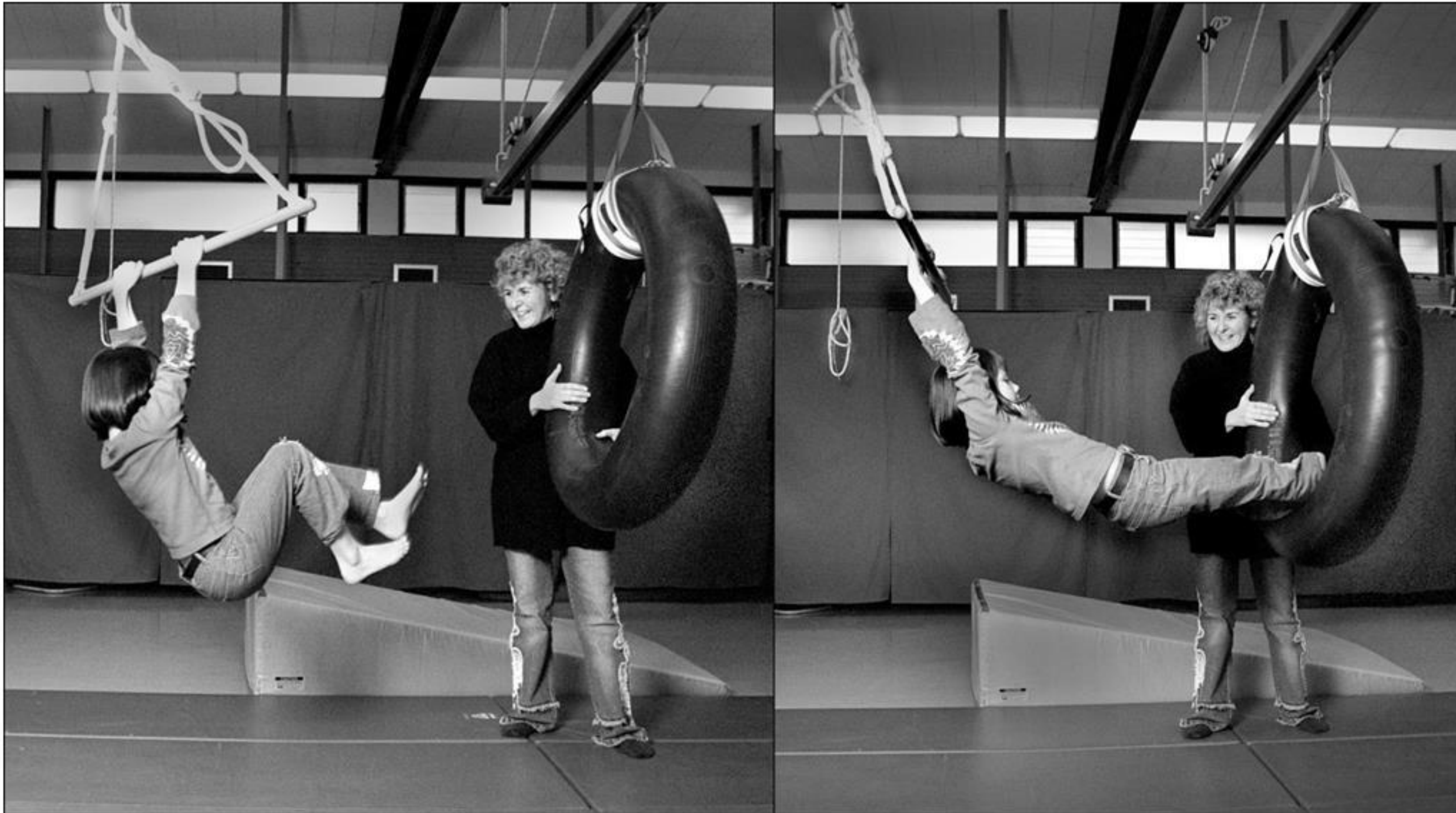
Problems with timing, motor coordination, execution, and completing projected action sequences.

Difficulty Using Two Hands at the Same Time

Difficulty crossing the midline of the body to perform a task



Sequencing



Sequencing of vestibular/proprioceptive inputs in the cerebellum is a primary basis of internal rhythm, timing, and simple muscle contractions.

Techniques for Self-Regulation



Rhythm provides structure for movement, telling us how to move through time and space

- Use rhythm when you want to either speed up or slow down the level of arousal.



Calming Touch





The Pea Pod is a great resource for giving deep pressure input for all kids to help them relax and chill out, or to recover from meltdowns or times of being upset.



Layered
Lycra

When to use the Lycra Swing

- Choose the lycra swing when you want to encourage a curled up position, which helps to develop core muscles.
- The lycra swing provides deep pressure touch and proprioceptive input the entire time the child is in the swing.
- The lycra swing can serve as a sensory retreat.
- Vestibular input provided by the lycra swing can either help to calm or to alert.



Deep Pressure Activities

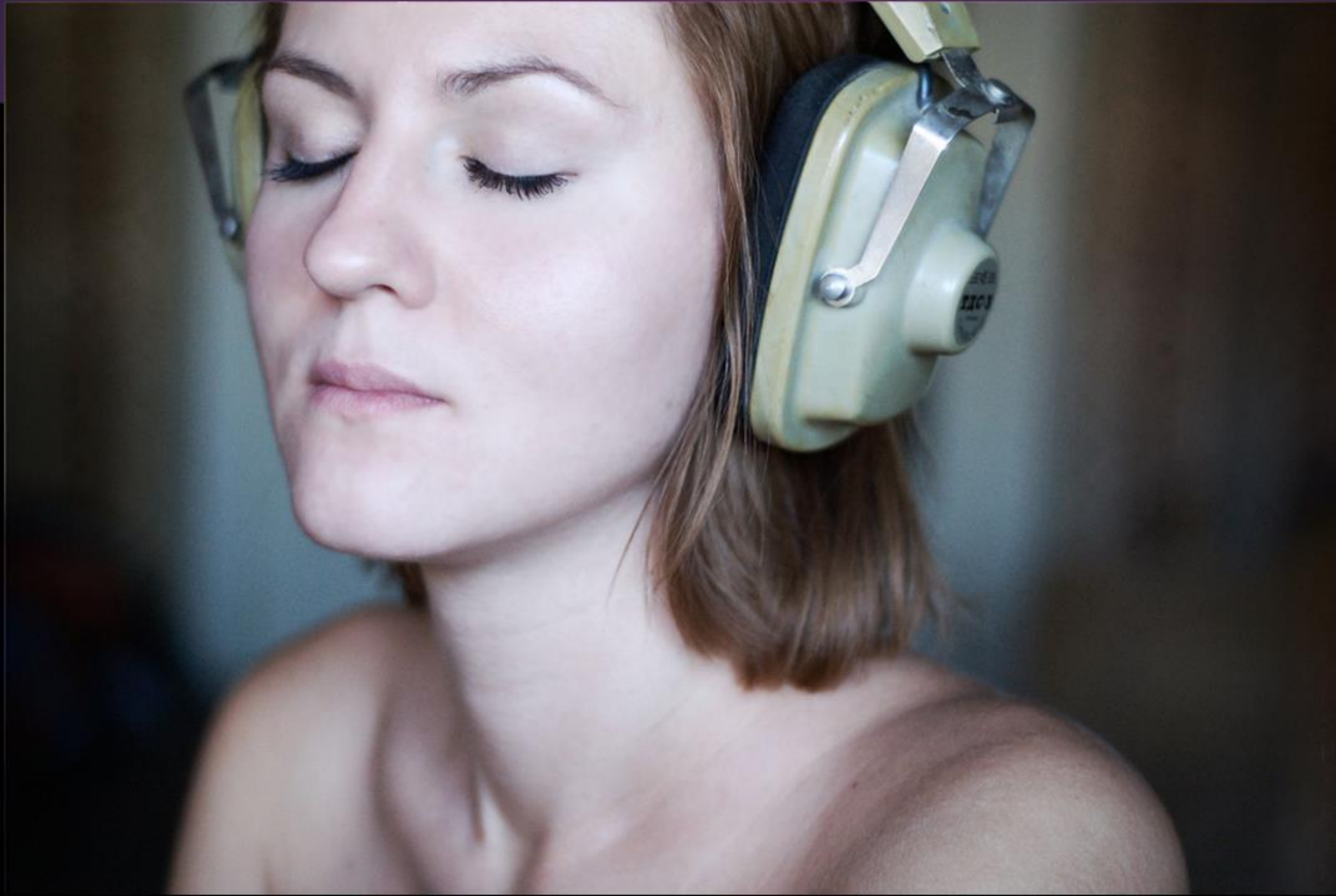
Weighted blanket



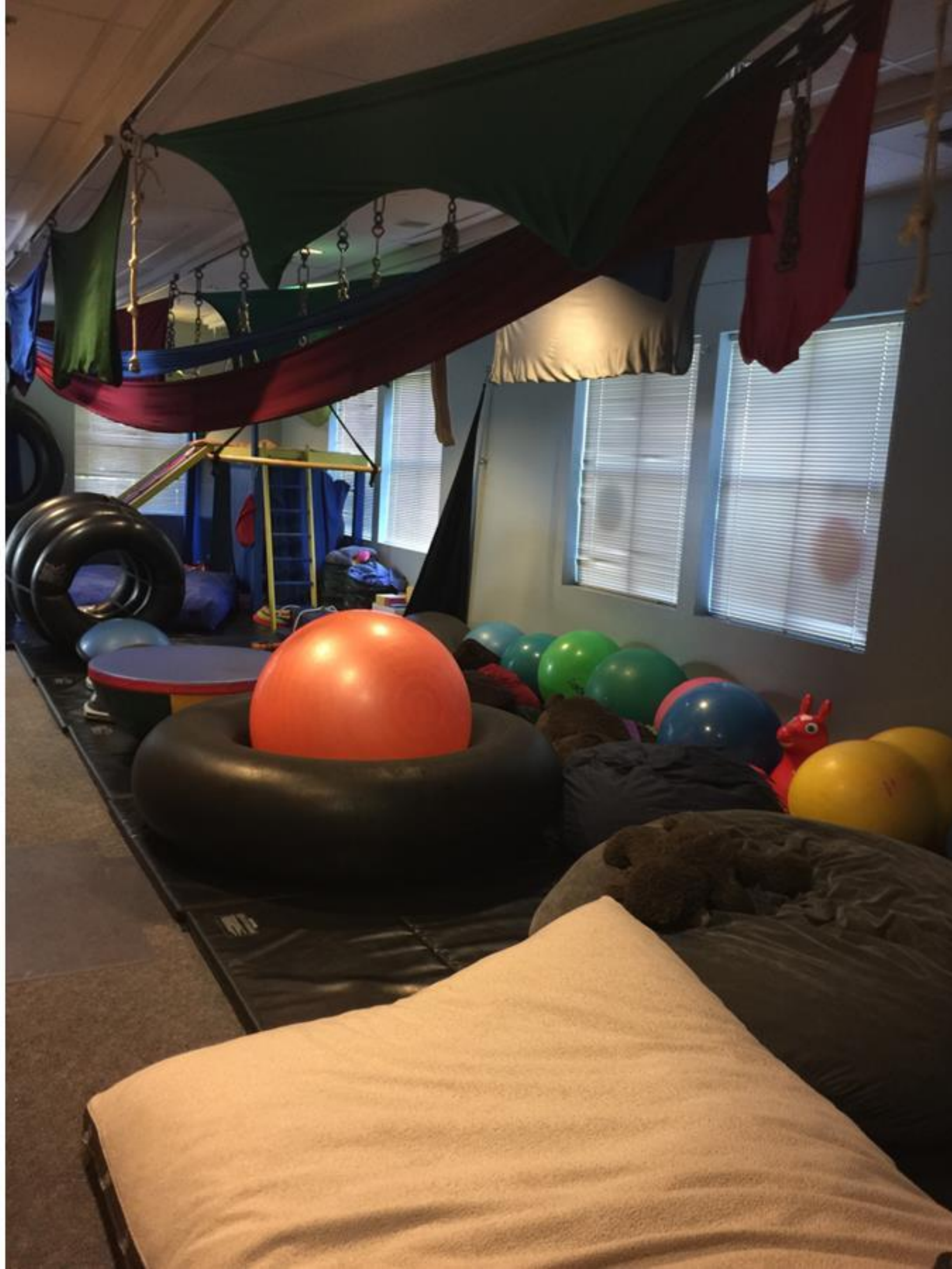
Moving Through Space



Therapeutic Listening







Alex Lopiccolo's Design
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Thank you!

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