

mobile together with the child, as suggested by the orthoptist,

- the paediatrician to dangle a fuzzy koosh ball on the end of his stethoscope and explain the importance of sensory stimulation and learning to parents,
- the health visitor to introduce sensory ideas into routines, changing the colour of bath water, putting a nice smell on the warm towel to enfold the baby,
- the voluntary worker bringing help with benefits could also bring information about attractive sensory environments in the neighbourhood, the local school 'lite' room, the herb garden at the garden centre, etc.

This initial training should be updated and revised through in-service training. Sensory workshops not only educate the professional in the senses; they provide a practical and simple method of intervention that is enjoyable and non-threatening to anyone involved.

The second way forward with sensory intervention is the most crucial as it involves the most important and essential part of the special baby's life - their family. This includes extended family members and friends - usually at a loss on how to help but nevertheless wanting to help in a practical way. This need to help could be acknowledged and supported with a **sensory kit**.

A sensory kit could contain a range of sensory materials, simple information on stimulating the senses and how to do this within the normal family routine. It could form part of the hospital or surgery 'welcome baby' pack. Families do not need checklists, training sessions, etc. at a time when emotions are overflowing, time schedules are disrupted and life is on hold. The kit would enable families to have simple sensory interactions in daily routines despite the enormous complex issues in their thoughts such as - the future, how can I cope?

While there is no easy answer to the future, there may be some sense of achievement in stimulating their baby to respond. Sensory kits for patients who are in a coma are in use in some hospitals. They try to stimulate the patient **back** to consciousness. A sensory baby kit could stimulate them **on** to consciousness of the world around them.

In conclusion ...

As the special baby grows older, they will receive more formal sensory training and education as they enter pre-school or school provision. It is nevertheless important that work with the senses continues in settings other than school. The link to the next steps of beaming will be made at this stage and again the crucial role of the family and its rich contribution should be clearly acknowledged. The prerequisites to beaming needed for progression in beaming are:

- beginning to look and attend,
- beginning to communicate,
- beginning to relate,
- beginning to play,
- beginning to co-ordinate the body, and
- overcoming behavioural barriers

These all need a sound sensory base and familiarity with the senses for everyone to succeed - **families and professionals sensing together.**

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