

Vest Schedules

What is the importance of the vest/Why do children wear them?

- The vest has a calming/organizing effect on children with sensory processing difficulties. Sensory integration/processing is taking in information about our environment using our senses (touch, hearing, taste, seeing, smell, sense of what your body is doing and where your body is in space). Through sensory integration we are able to interpret all of the senses and respond appropriately, which allows us to work, play and interact with others.
- A child with poor body awareness and sensory regulation will usually display poor attention span, increased body adjustments/movements, increased difficulty following directives, poor posture. These characteristics are intensified when a child with poor sensory processing skills is placed in a large group with a lot of auditory and visual distractions.
- The vest helps DECREASE HYPER-SENSITIVITY AND INCREASE AWARENESS. A child who is less defensive and more aware of what their body is doing as well as what is going on in their environment (verbal and visual directions, the loudness of their voice, what their peers are doing, the activity that they are currently presented with, etc) will be more alert and ready to learn!
- A child with increased body awareness will become more attentive, independent and successful with school activities.
- To get an idea of what increased body awareness feels like, the next time you are carrying a heavy bag of groceries, laundry, etc...take a moment and see how you are more aware of what and where your body parts are doing (for example: that your hands are squeezing tightly, your elbows are bent/straight, your breathing heavy, etc).
- It is important to keep in mind that the vests should be worn on a consistent basis...not on an "as needed" basis.

Why are the vests worn at certain times of the day? Why are they taken on and off?

- The vests should be typically worn when the child is not engaging in a lot of movement (such as gym, recess, etc). Because during these times the children are getting a lot of organizing input when running, jumping, hopping, even walking!
 - * The vests can be worn 30 minutes but no longer than one hour. Please consult your child's Occupational Therapist for the recommended time. In the beginning of the year, the children are being exposed to new teachers, routines and increased expectations. So as a result, they may need more "input" from the vest to help keep them calm, organized and alert.
- The reason why the vests are taken on/off is to help teach the brain to keep them at a more organized/alert state throughout the whole day.
- The effects of the vest typically last a ½ hour in the beginning but as the child continues to mature and develop, it is thought that the brain will too. Therefore, the child will not be required to wear the vest throughout the entire school day.
- Each child is different and so you will notice that their vest wearing schedule will change.
- Children should not wear vests if they are feeling ill or if the temperature is REALLY HOT!
- If you have any concerns please email or call your child's Occupational Therapist