

**Disclosing Autism Diagnosis to Peers  
Pre-Teaching**

**Lesson One  
The Brain and Sensory Input**

<b>Learning Intention:</b>	By the end of this lesson we want the children to know that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are 5 senses</li><li>• Everyone has a brain and the brain controls everything we do</li><li>• The senses collect information from our environment that are then collected and interpreted by the brain. The information coming into our brain through our senses is called sensory input.</li><li>• Some brains can process sensory input quite well.</li><li>• Some brains have trouble processing sensory input and this can cause a person to feel overwhelmed, scared or in pain.</li></ul>
<b>Learning/Teaching Activities</b>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: yellow; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"><b>Vocabulary:</b> Senses Brain Sensory Input Processing Overwhelmed</div>	<b>Engaging - The Senses:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>The Brain and Sensory Input</b> accompanying slide show link <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have students stand and do the following as teacher gives instructions:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li># Put your hands on your ears - think about what you can hear</li><li># Put your hands on your eyes - think about what you can see</li><li># Put your hands on your nose - think about what you can smell</li><li># Put your hands on your tongue - think about what you can taste</li><li># Put your hands on your hands - think about what you can feel<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Formative Assessment</b> - quick check/scan to measure student understanding of the body parts that link in with the senses:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li># At school we hear the bell - point to the part of your body that helps you to hear the bell</li><li># In the classroom we can see books - point to the part of your body that helps you to see the books</li><li># At lunch time we can smell food - point to the part of your body that helps you to smell food</li><li># When we eat we can taste food - point to the part of your body we use to taste things</li><li># There are lots of things we can touch and feel - point to a part of your body that you might use to touch or feel things</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul> <b>Key Content</b> <p>We have 5 senses. Sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Our 5 senses help us to experience and understand the world. There is a special name for all of the things we hear, see, smell, taste and touch. That special name is <b>sensory input</b>. Sensory means senses and input means information going in. That information goes into our brain through our senses.</p> <b>Engaging: The Brain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Formative Assessment</b> - quick check/scan to measure student understanding that they have a brain and where it is located in the body:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li># I wonder....what is a brain?</li><li># I wonder...does everyone have a brain?</li><li># I wonder....where is the brain in our bodies? Can you point to your brain?</li><li># I wonder...what does the brain do?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have students share their ideas.</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>

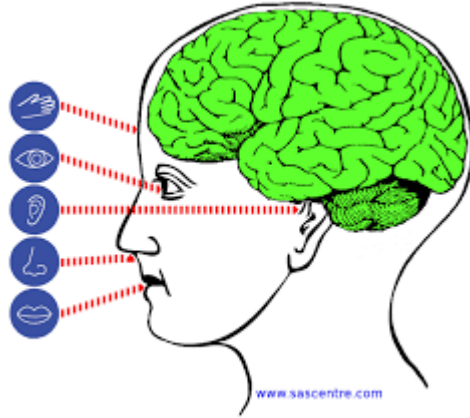
## Key content

### Everyone has a brain and the brain controls everything we do

The brain is the control centre of our bodies. The brain is like your own super computer!

Our brains control our movements, thoughts and feelings. Our brains are working all of the time. Brains are amazing!

All of the things that we see, feel, hear, taste and smell around us go into our brain. And our brain sorts that information out. When a brain sorts the information out that is called **processing**. Look at the picture - all of the things that a person can see, hear, feel, taste and touch goes into our brain and the brain sorts that information out. This is called **processing**.



Have a look at this picture. This is a picture of a toll booth. Cars go through a toll booth before continuing on the highway. Imagine the cars in the picture are all of the information you see, feel, hear, taste and smell everyday. Imagine the toll booth is your brain, sorting out all of that information and sending it to parts of your brain so that you can make sense of it. This is called processing sensory information. Some brains can process sensory information easily. See the cars going through. The toll is sorting them and they are going through easily with no problems. Some brains can sort out sensory information quite easily



Some brains have trouble sorting out sensory information. For some brains, sensory information can get all mixed up and when this happens a person can feel overwhelmed, confused, scared or even in pain. Have a look at this picture. Imagine the cars are all of the sensory input going into this person's brain. See how all the cars are getting mixed up? The cars aren't organised and moving smoothly. It's kind of like a traffic jam. Some people's brains cannot sort out sensory information easily. Their brains can feel like this

traffic jam. When this happens they can feel overwhelmed, confused, scared or even hurt.



**Additional Resources:**

[▶ The Five Senses | The Dr. Binocs Show | Educational Videos For Kids](#)

[▶ How Your Brain Works? - The Dr. Binocs Show | Best Learning Videos For Kids | Peekaboo Kidz](#)

**Disclosing Autism Diagnosis to Peers**  
**Pre-Teaching**

**Lesson Two**  
**What is Autism?**

<b>Learning Intention:</b>	By the end of this lesson we want the children to know that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Some brains have trouble processing sensory input and when that happens a person can find sensory input overwhelming, confusing, scary or even painful.</li><li>● Autism is a special word that can be used to describe it when a person's brain processes sensory input differently.</li><li>● Everyone experiences thousands of sensory experiences everyday. Sensory experiences can be difficult for a person with Autism.</li><li>● An autistic person can find normal everyday things overwhelming, scary or even painful.</li></ul>
<div style="background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"><b>Vocabulary:</b> Senses Brain Sensory Input Processing Sensory experiences Overwhelmed Autism</div>	<p><b>Review from Lesson One:</b></p> <p><b>Key Content:</b> <b>We have 5 senses.</b> Sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Our 5 senses help us to experience and understand the world. There is a special name for all of the things we hear, see, smell, taste and touch. That special name is <b>sensory input</b>. Sensory means senses and input means information going in. That information goes into our brain through our senses.</p> <p><b>Everyone has a brain and the brain controls everything we do</b> The brain is the control centre of our bodies. The brain is like your own super computer! Our brains control our movements, thoughts and feelings. Our brains are working all of the time. Our brains help us understand the world. Brains are amazing! All of the things that we see, feel, hear, taste and smell around us go into our brain. And our brain sorts that information out. When the brain sorts information that is called processing.</p> <p>Autism is a special world that describes a different brain. A person with autism may have trouble making sense of the world around them. A person with autism may find it difficult to process sensory information. A person with autism might find it difficult to communicate with other people. A person with autism might find everyday things like talking to friends or going to the shops very difficult. Remember the traffic jam? A traffic jam can be noisy, confusing and stressful. The cars cannot move easily. It can be hard to get out of a traffic jam. Remember, the brain of an autistic person can sometimes feel like a traffic jam and when that happens it is really difficult for them to do things that you find easy. The cars moved easily through the toll booth didn't they? It was easy. The cars were stuck in the traffic jam. It was hard to for them to get out or even move. Just like the traffic jam, an autistic person can feel stuck and find it really hard to speak to others, or stay calm, or feel relaxed when that happens. They can feel overwhelmed, confused, scared or even in pain.</p> <p>Some traffic jams are easy to get out of. Some traffic jams can be very big and difficult to get out of. Just like that, when an autistic person's brain becomes overwhelmed with sensory experiences it can be very stressful and upsetting - sometimes they can calm down quickly, other times it may take longer. They may do things like yell, scream, hit. They may be very frightened. They may feel pain in certain parts of their bodies. Sometimes people with autism try to hide this stress and pain because it can be embarrassing for them.</p>

Remember these pictures?

Some brains can process information really easily - like the cars going smoothly through the toll booth.

Some people's brains have trouble sorting out sensory information easily. Their brains can feel like this traffic jam. When this happens they can feel overwhelmed, confused, scared or even pain. A person with autism may find sensory input overwhelming (like the traffic jam) and instead of sorting the information out easily, may become overwhelmed, confused, scared or even feel pain.



Everyone's brain works differently. Everyone is different. We are all good at different things. We all feel different emotions. People with autism see the world differently. They can be very good at certain things. But people with autism can also find things that are easy for us very difficult. Like making friends....or talking to people....or being in a crowd....

People with autism can find it really hard to tell people how they are feeling so often they are unable to ask for help.

We can be good friends by remembering that an Autistic person needs our understanding and support. We can be good friends by understanding that their brain works differently and that some things that we find easy may be very hard for them.

[▶ Amazing Things Happen - by Alexander Amelines](#)

[▶ Fast Facts About Autism For Kids \(World Autism Awareness Day\)](#)

Lessons written by Renae Dunleavy 2022

[☰ An Amazing Brain - Children's Story](#)