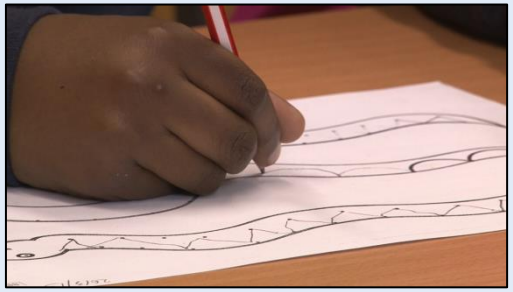
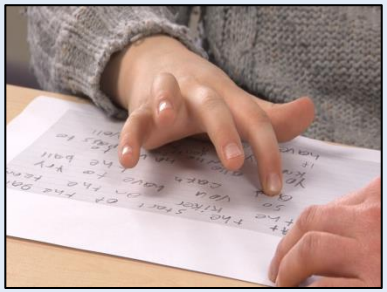
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Helping children with their handwriting

Occupational Therapy, Hackney Ark



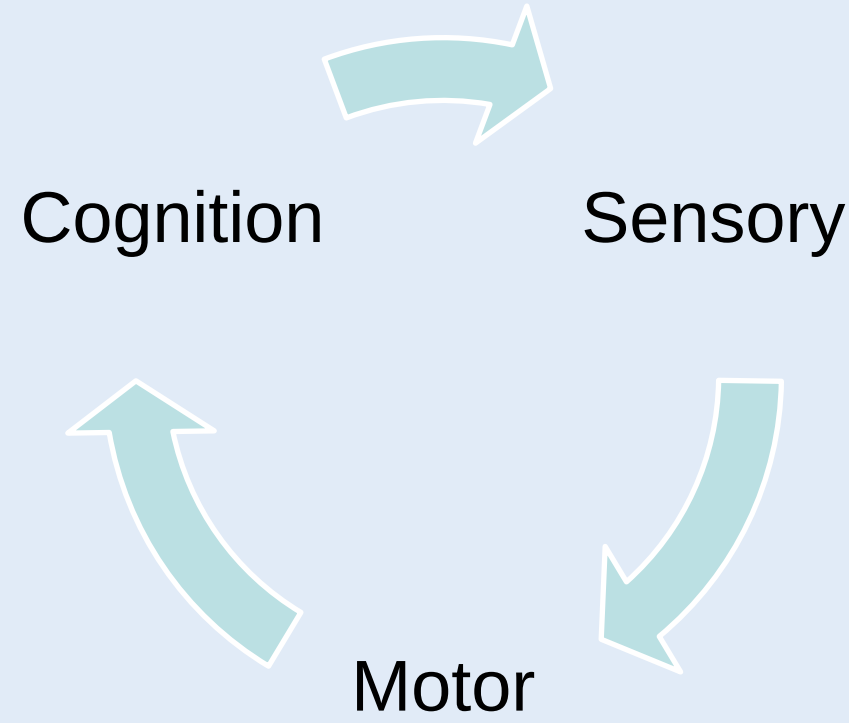




Objectives

- To understand components of handwriting
- To understand impact of sensory processing and attention on handwriting
- To be able to implement appropriate strategies to improve handwriting

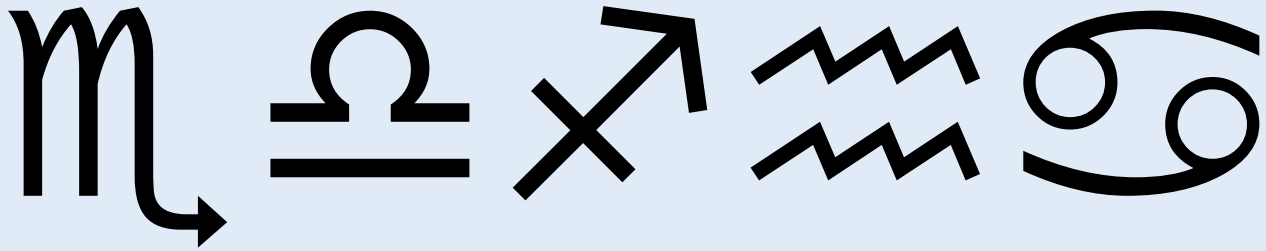
Learning to write

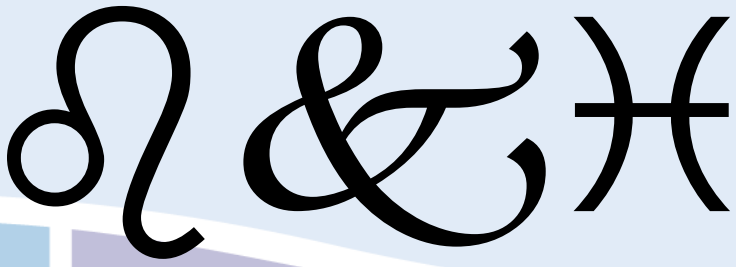


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Try drawing these shapes whilst standing on one leg….





What factors impact on handwriting?

- Posture
- Visual motor integration
- Pencil grip
- Pencil control
- Handwriting pressure
- Attention
- Sensory processing
- Environment
- Learning levels

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Posture



Posture – why is it important?

A good position helps:

- stability
- use of hands
- concentration



Posture – how should they be sitting?





- Close to desk and desk at correct height
- Bottom fully on chair
- Feet flat on floor
- Resting forearm on desk
- Not “slumped” over desk

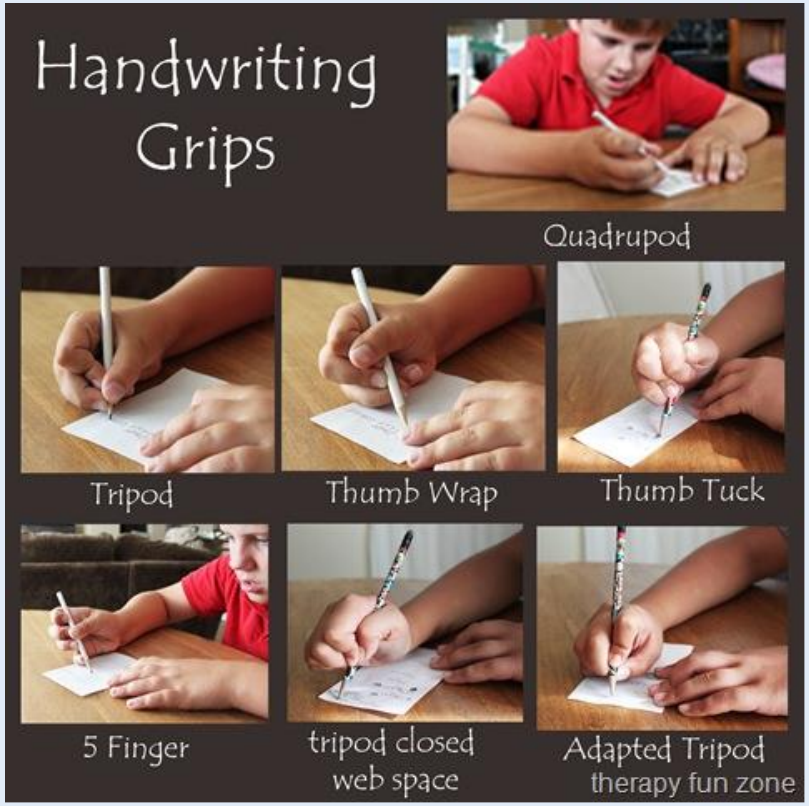
Visual motor integration

- The ability to use your eyes and hands together to copy what you are seeing
- You need to be able to interpret and make meaning of the visual information coming in, and then respond appropriately with the required physical movements
- Children may have problems with copying, cutting accurately and doing puzzles.

Pencil grip



Different pencil grips



- There are many different ways of holding a pencil
- How do you hold your pencil?

Developing a good pencil grip



- Use short 1” pencils / crayons / chalk
- Describe the grip as like a ‘bird’s beak’
- Use a sticker around the pencil to show where to hold it
- Use a pencil grip

Pencil Control



Pencil control

- Do not go straight into writing letters and words
- First practise getting control of the pencil by doing:
  - ➢dot to dots
  - ➢mazes
  - ➢drawing along roads
- Aim to develop fluency



Writing Pressure



Writing pressure

- Pressure influences the speed and effort with which we are able to write
- Aiming for medium pressure
- Increase the child's awareness of the pressure through their pencil using activities such as:

- Palm pushes varying pressure (hard, soft, medium)
- Writing with varying pressure
- Doing texture rubbings
- Writing in playdoh/on tissue paper/tin foil backed with cardboard

Handwriting development

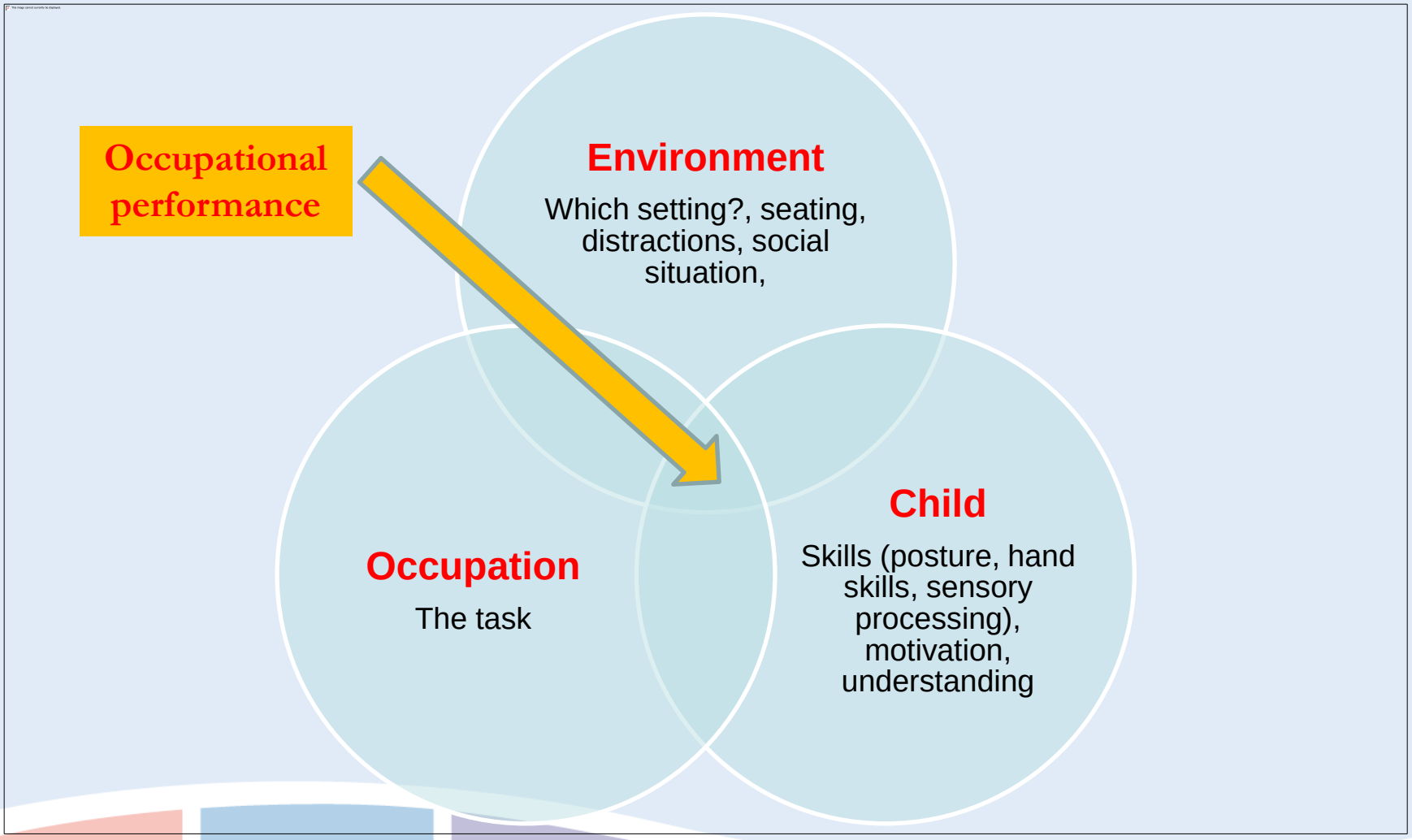
- Scribbling
- Pre-writing shapes
- Letter formation



- Start with imitation
- Keep it BIG
- Consolidate skills before moving on
- Don’t move onto cursive until the child is able to form letters appropriately in print

Letter families

- Magic C Letters: c a d g o s
- Line Letters: l t i j
- Diver Letters: r n m h b p
- Slide Letters: v w x y z k
- Tricky Letters: u q e f


Occupational performance
Environment
Which setting?, seating, distractions, social situation,
Occupation
The task
Child
Skills (posture, hand skills, sensory processing), motivation, understanding

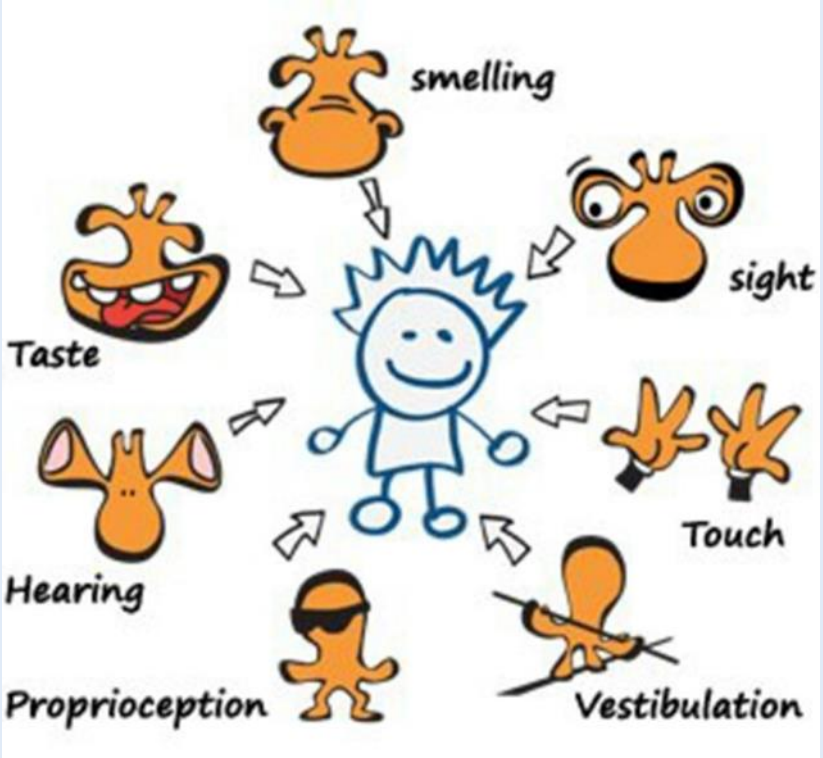
Environment

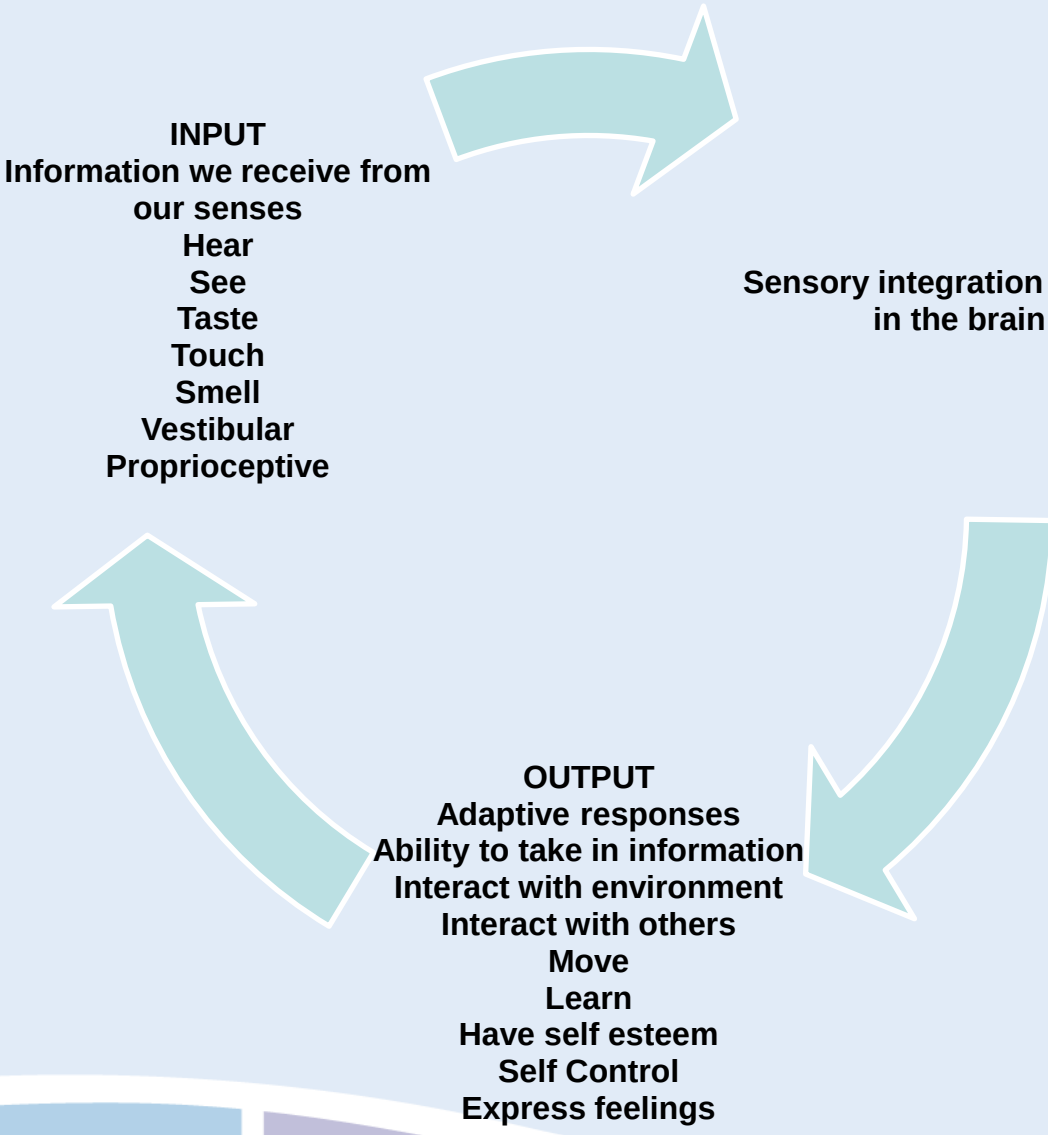
- Noise
- Visual distractions
- Who the child sitting beside
- Table set up
- Location within classroom
- Temperature

Sensory and attention

What are our senses?

- Touch
- Taste
- Smell
- Sight
- Hearing
- Movement (vestibular)
- Body awareness (proprioception)




INPUT
Information we receive from our senses
Hear
See
Taste
Touch
Smell
Vestibular
Proprioceptive
Sensory integration process in the brain
OUTPUT
Adaptive responses
Ability to take in information
Interact with environment
Interact with others
Move
Learn
Have self esteem
Self Control
Express feelings

Multi-sensory approach







Attention

- Grading activities can help a child that is struggling as they master small steps of a task
- Use visual prompts as reminders
- Have breaks – try using the activities to develop stability
- Sticker chart / certificates
- Giving the child roles and responsibilities in class

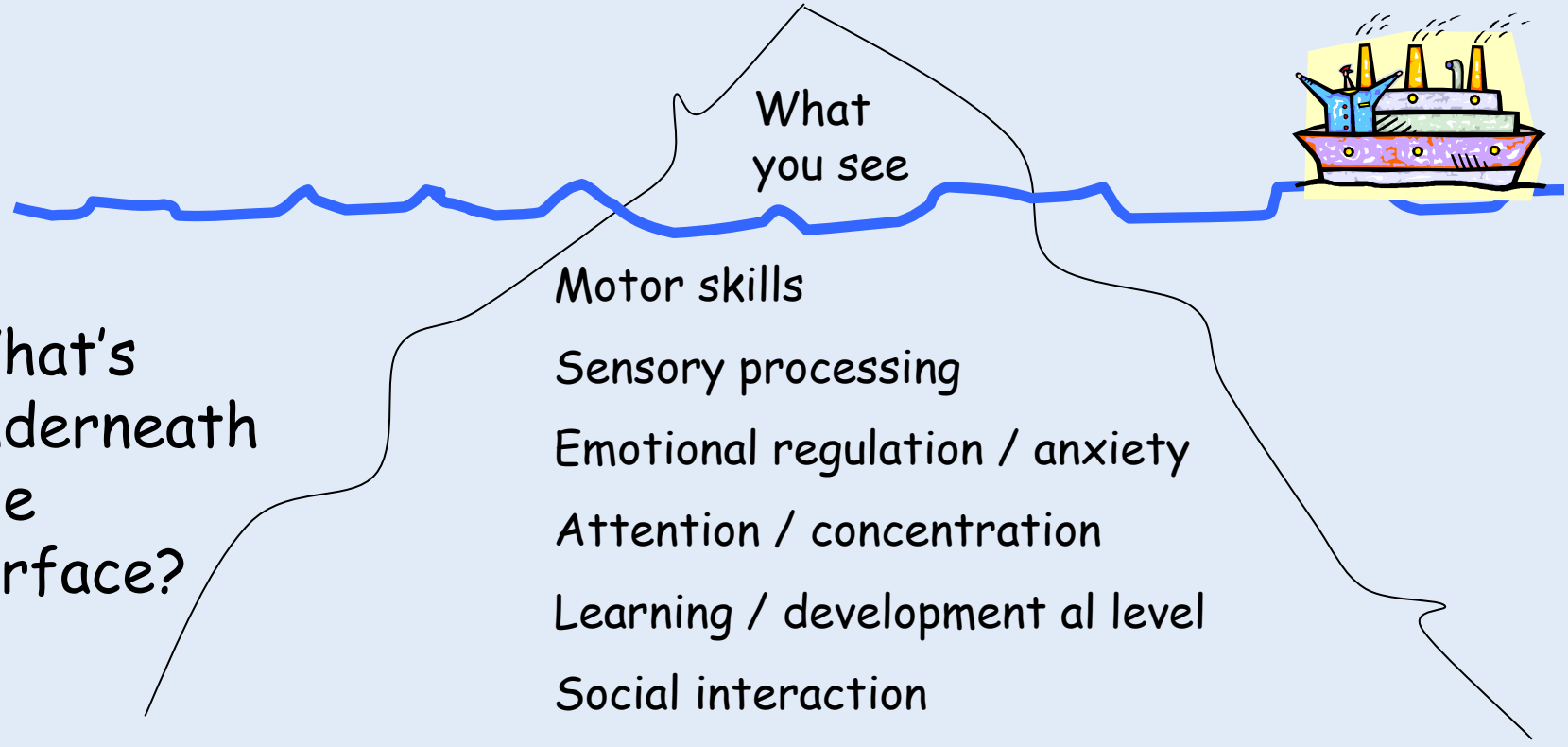
Case study

- Your child isn't writing on the line

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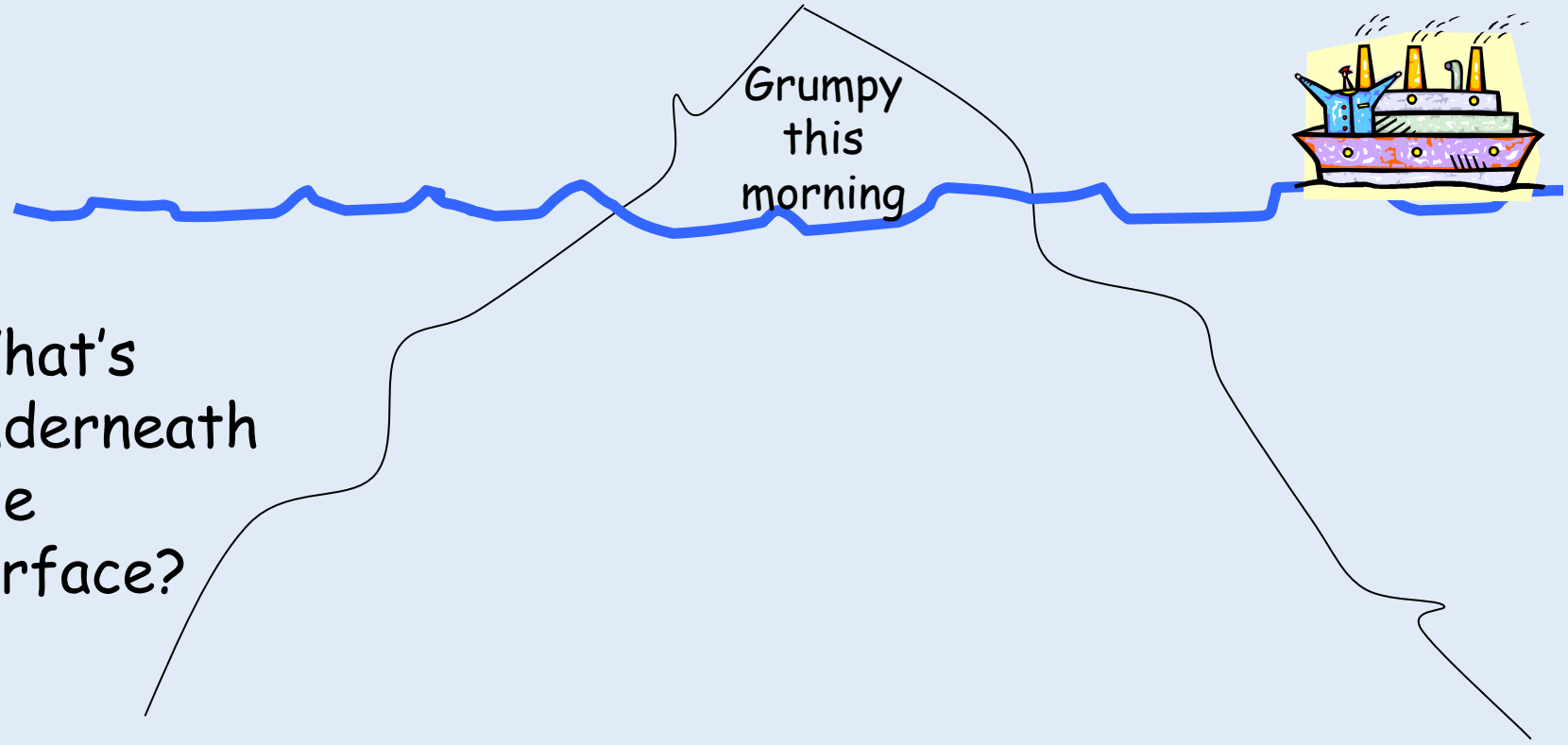
Using the Iceberg



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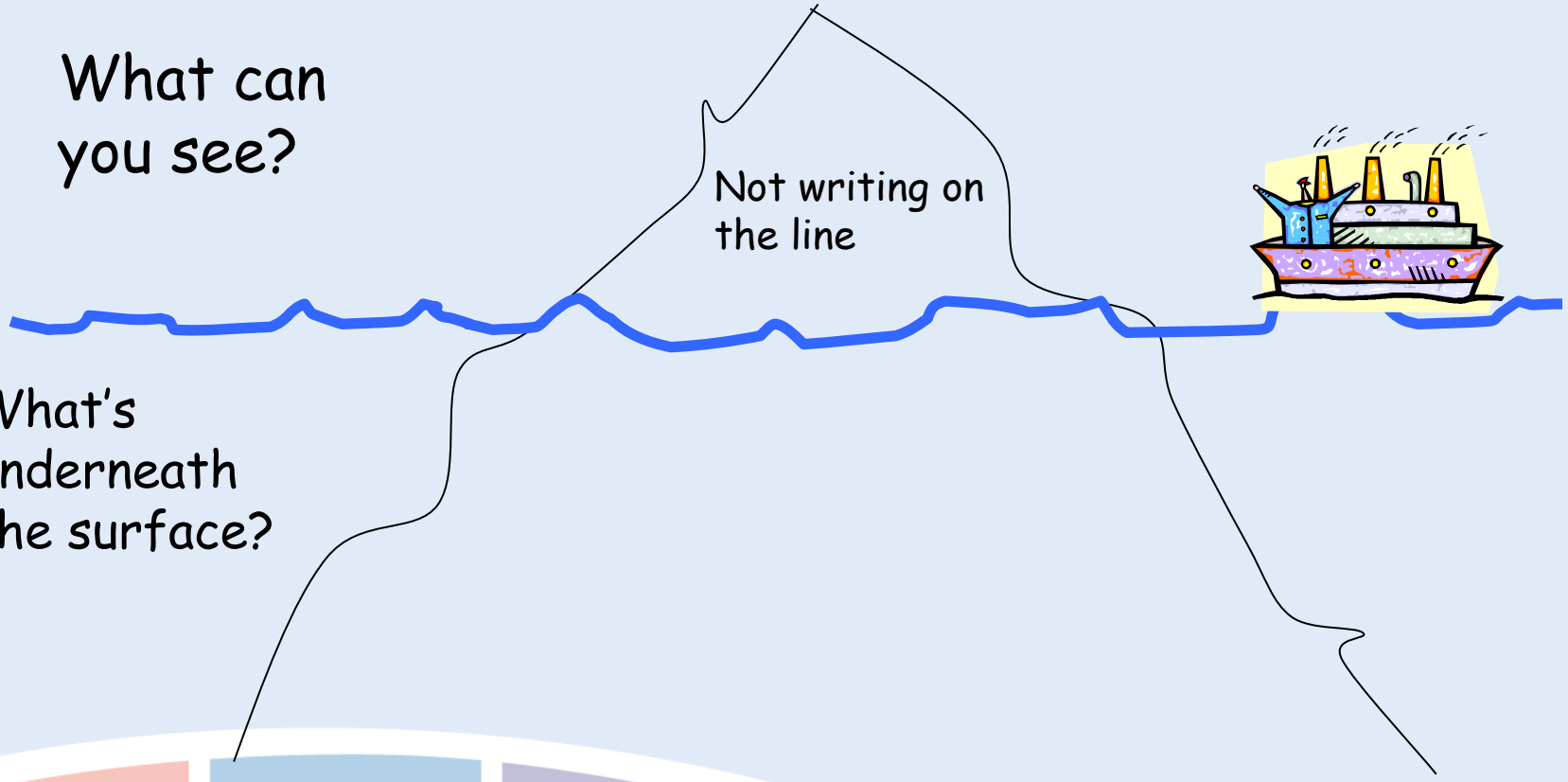
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Using the Iceberg



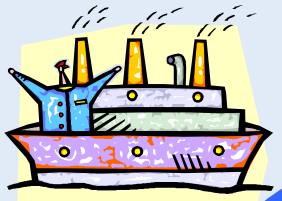
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Using the Iceberg

What can you see?

Not writing on the line



What's underneath the surface?

- **Child** – pencil control, grip, posture, cognition, attention,
- **Environment** – noise/light/distractions?
- **Task** – too big/ not clear expectations? Not enough sensory input?

Focus on those component skills

Change the environment

Grade?
Shorter?
More sensory?

Shoreditch school

- 14.11.16 – workshop, ask us any questions!