



SENSORY COSTUME: THERAPEUTIC APPAREL FOR CHILDREN WITH SENSORY INTEGRATION DYSFUNCTION

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A design process developed by Joann Boles was used to develop a therapy garment for children with sensory integrative dysfunction who participated in occupational therapy. The design process included (a) problem development, (b) needs assessment, (c) prototype development, and (d) evaluation.

The garment solution consisted of a sleeveless pullover top, removable cape, and weights. A beetle theme was featured. The top held six 1" wide elastic band loops that were assessable from slots near the hemline, side seam, armseye, and shoulder seam. The top was constructed from spandex. The top's beetle was constructed from a variety of textured fabrics. One-half pound baby bug weights fit in top front and back pockets. The cape's beetle had two 9" x 12" pockets with zipper and button closures. Wings provided lacing and a separating zipper.

The garment allowed full body movement and provided safety features for full interaction in the environment. Proprioceptive input and gross motor opportunities were provided through the elastic band loops and bug weights, and promoted the use of vestibular integrating equipment with the cape. Tactile opportunities were provided through the variety of materials. Fine and perceptual motor skills were promoted by manipulatives on the cape and the opportunity to store fine motor activities in the cape pockets. Storing activities in the cape promoted smooth transitions, motor planning, and self discipline. The bug theme appealed to the wearers' play interests and promoted imaginative scenarios during therapy, thus aiding in self organization and attention to task.