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## PAEDIATRIC THERAPY SERVICES ~ SENSORY ATTACHMENT INTERVENTION

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Sensory attachment intervention (SAI) uses a child led, constructive play based approach to support children with a combination of difficulties originating from sensory processing difficulties alongside attachment issues relating to the way that they interact with others, in particular, their primary caregiver(s).

SAI involves close collaboration between the primary caregivers and therapist using debriefing sessions (based on therapist observation and footage that the caregivers film); this is with a view to utilising the care-child engagement to improve the child's core sense of self, both emotionally and physiologically.

The therapist will work with the care givers in order to facilitate a home based programme that can build upon the work in clinic.

### AIMS OF SAI

- Empower and enable the caregiver to become a psychobiological regulator for the child.
- Support the child to avoid triggering trauma that the child may have experienced, as such responses do not allow the child to engage in life in an optimal manner (flight/fight/freeze).
- Facilitate learning in the child and caregivers regarding the use of the sensory approaches to de-escalate in stressful situations.
- Enable a balance of activity within the occupations that the child engages in (between nurture tasks/challenge tasks) by directing sensory-emotional activities that will allow the child to develop both physically and emotionally.

### WHO CAN SAI HELP?

Children are heavily influenced by their early experiences, in how they develop both emotionally and physically. Any kind of traumatic event within this period, such as neglect, abuse, traumatic birth, stressful home situation (for mother whilst in utero and/or for the child) can influence the child's development and how they cope with day to day life.

As a result of these experiences, children may present with behaviours such as: separation anxiety, hurting others, self-abusive behaviours, resistant behaviours, hides feelings, is too independent, hyperactivity, risk taking behaviours, extremes of behaviours with different individuals, extreme responses to touch (seeking/avoiding), strong responses to movement (seeking /avoiding), difficulties with movement and organising themselves, extreme responses to taste/sounds (seeking/avoiding).

These behaviours have a significant impact on the child's ability to engage with others in activities of daily living, with a view to maximising their potential in life.