



Speech and Language Services

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Sensory Processing Checklist

(Adapted from www.sensory-process-disorder.com)

Client _____ Date of Birth _____ Age _____ Today's Date _____

Person Completing Form _____ Relationship to Client _____

This sensory processing checklist provides education about signs of sensory processing dysfunction and allows professionals to gather a background of behavior responses. It is not to be used as diagnostic criteria for labeling children with sensory processing disorder; but rather, as an educational tool and checklist for knowledge. Please check symptoms that you feel best describe your child's sensory behaviors.

Signs Of Tactile Dysfunction

Tactile Sense: Input from the skin receptors about touch, pressure, temperature, pain, and movement of the hairs on the skin.

Hypersensitivity To Touch (Tactile defensiveness)

becomes fearful, anxious or aggressive with light or unexpected touch
as an infant, did/does not like to be held or cuddled; may arch back, cry, and pull away
appears fearful of, or avoids standing in close proximity to other people or peers (especially in lines)
becomes frightened when touched from behind or by someone/something they cannot see (such as under a blanket)
complains about having hair brushed; may be very picky about using a particular brush
avoids group situations for fear of the unexpected touch
resists friendly or affectionate touch from anyone besides parents or siblings
dislikes kisses, will "wipe off" place where kissed
prefers hugs
a raindrop, water from the shower, or wind blowing on the skin may feel like torture and produce adverse and avoidance reactions
may overreact to minor cuts, scrapes, and or bug bites
avoids touching certain textures of material (blankets, rugs, stuffed animals)
refuses to wear new or stiff clothes, clothes with rough textures, turtlenecks, jeans, hats, or belts, etc.
avoids using hands for play
avoids/dislikes/aversive to "messy play" (e.g., sand, mud, water, glue, glitter, PlayDoh, slime, shaving cream)
will be distressed by dirty hands and want to wipe or wash them frequently
distressed by seams in socks and may refuse to wear them
distressed by clothes rubbing on skin; may want to wear shorts and short sleeves year round; toddlers may prefer to be naked and pull diapers and clothes off constantly; OR may want to wear long sleeve shirts and long pants year round to avoid having skin exposed
distressed about tags in clothing, may ask to have removed
distressed about having face washed
distressed about having hair, toenails, or fingernails cut
resists brushing teeth and is extremely fearful of the dentist
is a picky eater; only eats certain tastes and textures; tends to avoid mixed textures as well as hot or cold foods; resists trying new foods
may refuse to walk barefoot on grass or sand
may walk on toes only

Hyposensitivity To Touch (Under-responsive)

may crave touch, needs to touch everything and everyone
is not aware of being touched/bumped unless done with extreme force or intensity
is not bothered by injuries, like cuts and bruises, and shows no distress with shots (may even say they love getting shots!)
may not be aware that hands or face are dirty or feel his/her nose running
may be self-abusive; pinching, biting, or banging his own head
mouths objects excessively
frequently hurts other children or pets while playing
repeatedly touches surfaces or objects that are soothing (i.e., blanket)
seeks out surfaces and textures that provide strong tactile feedback
thoroughly enjoys and seeks out messy play
craves vibrating or strong sensory input
has a preference and craving for excessively spicy, sweet, sour, or salty foods

Poor Tactile Perception And Discrimination

has difficulty with fine motor tasks such as buttoning, zipping, and fastening clothes
 may not be able to identify which part of their body was touched if they were not looking
 may be a messy dresser; looks disheveled, does not notice pants are twisted, shirt is half untucked, shoes are untied, one pant leg is up and one is down, etc.
 has difficulty using scissors, crayons, or silverware
 continues to mouth objects to explore them even after age two
 has difficulty figuring out physical characteristics of objects; shape, size, texture, temperature, weight, etc.
 may not be able to identify objects by feel, uses vision to help; such as, reaching into backpack or desk to retrieve an item

Signs Of Vestibular Dysfunction

Vestibular Sense: The vestibular system is the sensory system that responds to motion or change of head position. The receptors for movement are located in the inner ear. They tell the brain what direction the head is moving, the speed of the movement and where we are in space.

Hypersensitivity To Movement (Over-responsive)

avoids/dislikes playground equipment (e.g., swings, ladders, slides, or merry-go-rounds)
 prefers sedentary tasks, moves slowly and cautiously, avoids taking risks
 avoids/dislikes elevators and escalators; may prefer sitting while they are on them or, actually get motion sickness from them
 may appear terrified of falling even when there is no real risk of it
 afraid of heights, even the height of a curb or step
 fearful of feet leaving the ground
 fearful of going up or down stairs or walking on uneven surfaces
 afraid of being tipped upside down, sideways or backwards; will strongly resist getting hair washed over the sink
 startles if someone else moves them (e.g., pushing his/her chair closer to the table)
 as an infant, may never have liked baby swings or jumpers
 may be fearful of, and have difficulty riding a bike, jumping, hopping, or balancing on one foot (especially if eyes are closed)
 may have disliked being placed on stomach as an infant
 loses balance easily and may appear clumsy
 avoids rapid or rotating movements

Hyposensitivity To Movement (Under-responsive)

in constant motion, can't seem to sit still
 craves fast, spinning, and/or intense movement experiences
 loves being tossed in the air
 could spin for hours and never appear to be dizzy
 loves the fast, intense, and/or 'scary' rides at amusement parks
 always jumping on furniture, trampolines, spinning in a swivel chair, or getting into upside down positions
 loves to swing as high as possible and for long periods of time
 is a "thrill-seeker"; dangerous at times
 always running, jumping, hopping etc. instead of walking
 rocks body, shakes leg, or head while sitting

Poor Muscle Tone and/or Coordination

"floppy" body
 frequently slumps, lies down, and/or leans head on hand or arm while working at his/her desk
 difficulty simultaneously lifting head, arms, and legs off the floor while lying on stomach ("superman" position)
 often sits in a "W sit" position on the floor
 fatigues easily!
 compensates for "looseness" by grasping objects tightly
 difficulty turning doorknobs, handles, opening and closing items
 difficulty catching him/her self if falling
 difficulty getting dressed and doing fasteners, zippers, and buttons
 may have never crawled or limited period of time when did crawl as a baby
 has poor body awareness; bumps into things, knocks things over, trips, and/or appears clumsy
 poor gross motor skills: jumping, catching a ball, jumping jacks, climbing a ladder etc.
 poor fine motor skills: difficulty using "tools", such as pencils, silverware, combs, scissors etc.
 may appear ambidextrous, frequently switching hands for coloring, cutting, writing etc.; does not have an established hand preference/dominance by 4 or 5 years old
 seems to be unsure about how to move body during movement (e.g., stepping over something)

Signs Of Proprioceptive Dysfunction

Proprioceptive Sense: Input from the muscles and joints about body position, weight, pressure, stretch, movement, and changes in position in space.

Sensory Seeking Behaviors

- seeks out jumping, bumping, and crashing activities
- stomps feet when walking
- kicks his/her feet on floor or chair while sitting at desk/table
- loves to be tightly wrapped in many or weighted blankets, especially at bedtime
- prefers clothes (and belts, hoods, shoelaces) to be as tight as possible
- loves/seek out "squishing" activities, enjoys bear hugs
- excessive banging on/with toys and objects
- loves "rough-housing" and tackling/wrestling games
- frequently falls on floor intentionally
- would jump on a trampoline for hours on end
- grinds his/her teeth throughout the day
- loves pushing/pulling/dragging objects
- loves jumping off furniture or from high places
- frequently hits, bumps or pushes other children
- chews on pens, straws, shirt sleeves, etc.

Difficulty With "Grading Of Movement"

- difficulty regulating pressure when writing/drawing; may be too light to see or so hard the tip of writing utensil breaks
- written work is messy and he/she often rips the paper when erasing
- always seems to be breaking objects and toys
- misjudges the weight of an object, such as a glass of juice, picking it up with too much force sending it flying or spilling, or with too little force and complaining about objects being too heavy
- may not understand the idea of "heavy" or "light"; would not be able to hold two objects and tell you which weighs more
- seems to do everything with too much force (e.g., walking, slamming doors, pressing things too hard, slamming objects down)
- plays with animals with too much force, often hurting them

Signs Of Auditory Dysfunction: (no diagnosed hearing problem)

Hypersensitivity To Sounds (Auditory defensiveness)

- distracted by sounds not normally noticed by others (e.g., humming of lights or refrigerators, fans, heaters, or clocks ticking)
- fearful of the sound of a flushing toilet (especially in public bathrooms), vacuum, hairdryer, squeaky shoes, or a dog barking
- startled or distracted by loud or unexpected sounds
- bothered/distracted by background environmental sounds (e.g., lawn mowing or outside construction)
- frequently asks people to be quiet (e.g., stop making noise, talking, or singing)
- runs away, cries, and/or covers ears with loud or unexpected sounds
- may refuse to go to movie theaters, parades, skating rinks, musical concerts, fireworks shows, etc.

Hyposensitivity To Sounds (Under-registers)

- often does not respond to verbal cues or to name being called
- appears to "make noise for noise's sake"
- loves excessively loud music or TV
- seems to have difficulty understanding or remembering what was said
- appears oblivious to certain sounds
- appears confused about where a sound is coming from
- talks self through a task, often out loud
- needs directions repeated often, or will say, "What?" frequently

Signs Of Oral Input Dysfunction

Hypersensitivity To Oral Input (Oral defensiveness)

- picky eater, often with extreme food preferences (e.g., limited repertoire of foods, picky about brands, resistive to trying new foods or restaurants, and may not eat at other people's houses)
- may only eat "soft" or pureed foods past 24 months of age
- may gag with textured foods
- has difficulty with sucking, chewing, and swallowing; may choke or have a fear of choking
- resists/refuses/extremely fearful of going to the dentist or having dental work done
- may only eat hot or cold foods
- may complain foods are 'too hot' that are at room temperature
- dislikes or complains about toothpaste and mouthwash
- avoids seasoned, spicy, sweet, sour or salty foods; prefers bland foods

Hyposensitivity To Oral Input (Under-registers)

- may lick, taste, or chew on inedible objects
- prefers foods with intense flavor (e.g., excessively spicy, sweet, sour, or salty)
- excessive drooling past the teething stage
- frequently chews on hair, shirt, or fingers
- constantly putting objects in mouth past the toddler years
- acts as if all foods taste the same
- can never get enough condiments or seasonings on his/her food
- loves vibrating toothbrushes and even trips to the dentist

Signs Of Olfactory Dysfunction (Smells)**Hypersensitivity To Smells (Over-Responsive)**

- reacts negatively to, or dislikes smells which do not usually bother, or get noticed, by other people
- tells other people (or talks about) how bad or funny they smell
- refuses to eat certain foods because of their smell
- offended and/or nauseated by bathroom odors or personal hygiene smells
- bothered/irritated by smell of perfume or cologne
- bothered by household or cooking smells

Hyposensitivity To Smells (Under-Responsive)

- has difficulty discriminating unpleasant odors
- may drink or eat things that are poisonous because they do not notice the noxious smell
- unable to identify smells from scratch 'n sniff stickers
- does not notice odors that others usually complain about
- fails to notice or ignores unpleasant odors
- makes excessive use of smelling when introduced to objects, people, or places

Signs Of Visual Input Dysfunction (No Diagnosed Visual Deficit)**Hypersensitivity To Visual Input (Over-responsiveness)**

- sensitive to bright lights; will squint, cover eyes, cry and/or get headaches from the light
- has difficulty keeping eyes focused on task/activity he/she is working on for an appropriate amount of time
- easily distracted by other visual stimuli in the room (e.g., movement, decorations, toys, windows, doorways)
- has difficulty in bright colorful rooms or a dimly lit room
- rubs his/her eyes, has watery eyes or gets headaches after reading or watching TV
- avoids eye contact

Hyposensitivity To Visual Input (Under-responsiveness)

- has difficulty telling the difference between similar printed letters or figures (e.g., p/q; b/d; +/x; or square/rectangle)
- has a hard time seeing the "big picture" (e.g., focuses on the details or patterns within the picture)
- has difficulty locating items among other items (e.g., papers on a desk, clothes in a drawer, items on a grocery shelf, or toys in a bin)
- often loses place when copying from a book or the chalkboard
- difficulty controlling eye movement to track and follow moving objects
- has difficulty telling the difference between different colors, shapes, and sizes
- often loses his/her place while reading or doing math problems
- makes reversals in words or letters when copying, or reads words backwards after first grade (e.g., "was" for "saw"; "no" for "on")
- complains about "seeing double"
- difficulty finding differences in pictures, words, symbols, or objects
- difficulty with consistent spacing and size of letters during writing and/or lining up numbers in math problems
- difficulty with jigsaw puzzles, copying shapes, and/or cutting/tracing along a line
- tends to write at a slant (up or down hill) on a page
- confuses left and right
- fatigues easily with schoolwork
- difficulty judging spatial relationships in the environment (e.g., bumps into objects/people or missteps on curbs and stairs)

Auditory-Language Processing Dysfunction

unable to locate the source of a sound
 difficulty identifying people's voices
 difficulty discriminating between sounds/words (e.g., "dare" and "dear")
 difficulty filtering out other sounds while trying to pay attention to one person talking
 bothered by loud, sudden, metallic, or high-pitched sounds
 difficulty attending to, understanding, and remembering what is said or read
 often asks for directions to be repeated and may only be able to understand or follow two sequential directions at a time
 looks to others for reassurance before answering
 difficulty putting ideas into words (written or verbal)
 often talks out of turn or "off topic"
 if not understood, has difficulty re-phrasing; may get frustrated, angry, and give up
 difficulty reading, especially out loud (may also be dyslexic)
 difficulty articulating and speaking clearly
 ability to speak often improves after intense movement

Emotional Response, Play, And Self-Regulation Dysfunction

Emotional Response

difficulty accepting changes in routine (to the point of tantrums)
 gets easily frustrated
 often impulsive
 functions best in small groups or individually
 variable and quickly changing moods; prone to outbursts and tantrums
 prefers to play on the outside, away from groups, or just be an observer
 avoids eye contact
 difficulty appropriately making needs known

Play Behavior

difficulty with imitative play (over 10 months)
 wanders aimlessly without purposeful play or exploration (over 15 months)
 needs adult guidance to play, difficulty playing independently (over 18 months)
 participates in repetitive play for hours (e.g., lining up toys, cars, blocks; watching one movie over and over)

Self-Regulation

excessive irritability, fussiness or colic as an infant
 can't calm or soothe self through pacifier, comfort object, or caregiver
 can't go from sleeping to awake without distress
 requires excessive help from caregiver to fall asleep (e.g., rubbing back or head, rocking, long walks, or car rides)

Internal Regulation (The Interoceptive Sense)

severe/several mood swings throughout the day (angry to happy in short periods of time, perhaps without visible cause)
 unpredictable state of arousal or inability to control arousal level (hyper to lethargic, quickly, vacillating between the two; over stimulated to under stimulated, within hours or days, depending on activity and setting)
 frequent constipation or diarrhea, or mixed during the same day or over a few days
 difficulty with potty training; does not seem to know when he/she has to go (e.g., cannot feel the necessary sensation that bowel or bladder are full)
 unable to regulate hunger; eats all the time or won't eat at all; unable to feel full/hungry

Please provide any additional information that will help us to better understand your child: