



Speech • Language • OT • PT

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SENSORY PROCESSING CHECKLIST

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

Client's name:		Birthdate:		Age:		Gender:	
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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 as an educational tool and checklist for knowledge. Please check symptoms that best describe your child's sensory behaviors.

Signs of Tactile Dysfunction

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 near 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 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/averse to "messy play" (e.g., sand, mud, water, glue, glitter, playdoh, slime, shaving cream/funny foam)	
Distressed by dirty hands and wants to wipe or wash them frequently	
Distressed by seams in socks and may refuse to wear them	
Toddlers may prefer to be naked and pull diapers and clothes off constantly	
Distressed by clothes rubbing on skin; may want to wear shorts and short sleeves year-round	
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	
May refuse to walk barefoot on grass or sand	
May walk on toes only	
Picky eater; only eats certain tastes/textures; may avoid mixed textures or hot or cold foods; resists trying new foods	

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 (e.g., 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	

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	
Messy dresser; may not notice pants are twisted, one pant leg is up/one down, shirt half untucked, shoes untied	
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 (e.g., looking into backpack or desk to retrieve an item)	

Signs of Vestibular Dysfunction

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, 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 a 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 self if falling	
Difficulty getting dressed and doing fasteners, zippers, and buttons	
May have never crawled or crawled for a limited period of time as a baby	
Has poor body awareness; bumps into things, knocks things over, trips, and/or appears clumsy	
Poor gross motor skills (e.g., jumping, catching a ball, jumping jacks, climbing a ladder)	
Poor fine motor skills (e.g., difficulty using "tools", such as pencils, silverware, combs, scissors)	
May appear ambidextrous, switches hands for coloring, cutting, writing; no hand preference by 4 or 5 years old	
Seems unsure about how to move body (e.g., stepping over something)	

Signs of Proprioceptive Dysfunction

Sensory Seeking Behaviors

Seeks out jumping, bumping, and crashing activities	
Stomps feet when walking	
Kicks 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/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 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; often rips the paper when erasing	
Always seems to be breaking objects and toys	
Misjudges weight of objects (e.g., picks up glass of milk too forcefully sending it flying or spilling); complains that objects are 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 sounds like flushing toilets (especially in public bathrooms), vacuum, hairdryer, squeaky shoes, barking dogs	
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)	
Startles, runs away, cries, and/or covers ears with loud or unexpected sounds	
May refuse to go to places like movie theaters, parades, skating rinks, musical concerts, fireworks shows	

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 frequently says, "What?"	

Signs of Oral Input Dysfunction

Hypersensitivity to Oral Input (oral defensiveness)

Picky eater (e.g., limited repertoire of foods or brands, resists trying new foods or restaurants, 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 eat only hot or only 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	
Frequently chews on hair, shirt, or fingers	
Excessive drooling past the teething stage	
Constantly putting objects in mouth past the toddler years	
Loves vibrating toothbrushes and even trips to the dentist	
Acts as if all foods taste the same	
Can never get enough condiments or seasonings on his/her food	
Prefers foods with intense flavor (e.g., excessively spicy, sweet, sour, or salty)	

Signs of Olfactory Dysfunction**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	
Bothered/irritated by smell of perfume or cologne	
Offended and/or nauseated by bathroom odors or personal hygiene smells	
Refuses to eat certain foods because of their smell	
Bothered by household or cooking smells	

Hyposensitivity to Smells (under-responsive)

Difficulty discriminating between unpleasant odors	
Does not notice or ignores odors that others usually complain about	
Makes excessive use of smelling when introduced to objects, people, or places	
Unable to identify smells from scratch 'n sniff stickers	
May drink or eat things that are poisonous because they do not notice the noxious smell	

Signs of Visual Input Dysfunction (no diagnosed vision problem)**Hypersensitivity to Visual Input (over-responsive)**

Sensitive to bright lights; squints, covers eyes, cries and/or gets headaches from the light	
Difficulty keeping eyes focused on a task/activity for an appropriate amount of time	
Easily distracted by other visual stimuli in the room (e.g., movement, decorations, toys, windows, doorways)	
Difficulty in bright colorful rooms or a dimly lit room	
Rubs eyes, has watery eyes, or gets headaches after reading or watching TV	
Avoids eye contact	

Hyposensitivity to Visual Input (under-responsive)

Difficulty telling the difference between similar printed letters or figures (e.g., p/q; b/d; +/x; or square/rectangle)	
Difficulty seeing the "big picture" (e.g., focuses on the details or patterns within the picture)	
Difficulty locating items among other items (e.g., papers on a desk, clothes in a drawer, items on a 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	
Difficulty discriminating between different colors, shapes, and sizes	
Difficulty finding differences in pictures, words, symbols, or objects	
Often loses his/her place while reading or doing math problems	
Reverses words or letters when copying, or reads words backwards after first grade (e.g., "was" for "saw"; "no" for "on")	
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)	
Complains about "seeing double"	

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, Play, and Regulation Dysfunction

Emotional

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 be alone, away from groups, or just be an observer	
Avoids eye contact	
Difficulty appropriately making needs known	

Play

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, car rides)	

Internal Regulation (Interoceptive)

Severe/several mood swings throughout the day (angry to happy in short periods of time, without visible cause)	
Unpredictable state of arousal or inability to control arousal level (hyper to lethargic, quickly vacillates 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., does not feel the 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:

NAME OF PERSON COMPLETING CHECKLIST

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIENT

DATE