



Sensory Processing Disorder Checklist

The purpose of our sensory checklist is to help us capture a complete picture of how your child functions and what their sensory needs are. Please complete the sensory checklist as a worksheet and feel free to write any information you see necessary.

Signs of Tactile Dysfunction

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

1. Hypersensitivity to touch (Tactile Defensiveness):

- Fearful, anxious, aggressive with light or unexpected touch
- Did/does not like to be held or cuddled
- Distressed when diaper is being, or needs to be, changed
- Fearful/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
- Bothered by rough bed sheets (i.e., if old and "bumpy")
- Avoids group situations for fear of the unexpected touch
- 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
- Refuses to wear new or stiff clothes, clothes with rough textures, turtlenecks, jeans, hats, or belts, etc.
- Avoids/dislikes/aversive to "messy play"
- Will be distressed by dirty hands and want to wipe or wash them frequently
- Excessively ticklish

- 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 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 eating certain tastes and textures; mixed textures tend to be avoided 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

2. Hyposensitivity to touch (Under-responsiveness):

- 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 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)
- 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

3. Poor Tactile Perception And Discrimination:

- Has difficulty with fine motor tasks such as buttoning, zipping, and fastening clothes
- May be a messy dresser; 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: Input from the inner ear about equilibrium, gravitational changes, movement experiences, and position in space.

1. Hypersensitivity to movement (Over-responsiveness):

- Avoids/dislikes playground equipment; i.e., swings, ladders, slides, or merry-go-rounds
- Prefers sedentary tasks, moves slowly and cautiously, avoids taking risks, and may appear "wimpy"
- Avoids/dislikes elevators and escalators; may prefer sitting while they are on them or, actually get motion sickness from them
- May physically cling to an adult they trust
- 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
- Startles if someone else moves them
- As an infant, may never have liked baby swings or jumpers
- Fearful/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
- Fearful of activities which require good balance
- Avoids rapid or rotating movements

2. Hyposensitivity to movement (Under-responsiveness):

- In constant motion, can't seem to sit still
- Craves fast, spinning, and/or intense movement experiences
- 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

3. Poor Muscle Tone and/or Coordination:

- Has a limp, "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 to stabilize body
- Fatigues easily
- Compensates for "looseness" by grasping objects tightly
- Difficulty turning doorknobs, handles, opening and closing items
- Difficulty catching him/her self if falling
- May have never crawled as an baby
- Has poor body awareness; bumps into things, knocks things over, trips, and/or appears clumsy
- Poor gross motor skills; jumping, catching a ball
- 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
- Has difficulty licking an ice cream cone
- Seems to be unsure about how to move body during movement, for example, stepping over something
- Difficulty learning exercise or dance steps

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.

1. 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
- Bites or sucks on fingers and/or frequently cracks his/her knuckles
- 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/seekes out "squishing" activities
- Enjoys bear hugs
- Excessive banging on/with toys and objects
- Loves "roughhousing" 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.

2. Difficulty with "Grading of Movement":

- Misjudges how much to flex and extend muscles during tasks/activities (i.e., putting arms into sleeves or climbing)
- 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; i.e., 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)

1. Hypersensitivity to Sounds (Auditory Defensiveness):

- Distracted by sounds not normally noticed by others; i.e., 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 with or distracted by loud or unexpected sounds
- Bothered/distracted by background environmental sounds; i.e., lawn mowing or outside construction

- Frequently asks people to be quiet; i.e., 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 etc.
- May decide whether they like certain people by the sound of their voice

2. 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
- Had little or no vocalizing or babbling as an infant
- Needs directions repeated often, or will say, "What?" frequently

Signs of Oral Input Dysfunction

1. Hypersensitivity to Oral Input (Oral Defensiveness):

- Picky eater, often with extreme food preferences; i.e., 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
- Dislikes or complains about toothpaste and mouthwash
- Avoids seasoned, spicy, sweet, sour or salty foods; prefers bland foods

2. Hyposensitivity to Oral Input (Under-registers):

- May lick, taste, or chew on inedible objects

- Prefers foods with intense flavor; i.e., 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)

1. Hypersensitivity to Smells (Over-responsiveness):

- 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
- May refuse to play at someone's house because of the way it smells
- Decides whether he/she likes someone or some place by the way it smells

2. Hyposensitivity to Smells (Under-Responsiveness):

- 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
- Uses smell to interact with object

Signs of Visual Input Dysfunction (No diagnosed visual deficit)

1. 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; i.e., movement, decorations, toys, windows, doorways etc.
- 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
- Enjoys playing in the dark

2. Hyposensitivity to Visual Input (Under-responsiveness)

or difficulty with tracking, discrimination or perception):

- Has difficulty telling the difference between similar printed letters or figures; i.e., p & q, b & d, + and x, or square and rectangle
- Has a hard time seeing the "big picture"; i.e., focuses on the details or patterns within the picture
- Has difficulty locating items among other items; i.e., papers on a desk, clothes in a drawer, items on a grocery shelf, or toys in a bin/toy box
- 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; i.e., "was" for "saw" and "no" for "on" after first grade
- 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; i.e., 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; i.e., "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 at others to/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

Social, Emotional, Play and Self-Regulation Dysfunction

Social:

- Difficulty getting along with peers
- Prefers playing by self with objects or toys rather than with people
- Does not interact reciprocally with peers or adults; hard to have a "meaningful" two-way conversation
- Self-abusive or abusive to others
- Others have a hard time interpreting child's cues, needs, or emotions
- Does not seek out connections with familiar people

Emotional:

- Difficulty accepting changes in routine (to the point of tantrums)
- Gets easily frustrated
- Often impulsive
- Functions best in small group 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:

- 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; i.e., lining up toys cars, blocks, watching one movie over and over etc.

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; i.e., rubbing back or head, rocking, long walks, or car rides

Internal Regulation:

- Becoming too hot or too cold sooner than others in the same environments; may not appear to ever get cold/hot, may not be able to maintain body temperature effectively
- Difficulty in extreme temperatures or going from one extreme to another (i.e., winter, summer, going from air conditioning to outside heat, a heated house to the cold outside)
- 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, etc.)
- 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 (i.e., cannot feel the necessary sensation that bowel or bladder are full)
- Unable to regulate thirst; always thirsty, never thirsty, or oscillates back and forth
- Unable to regulate hunger; eats all the time, won't eat at all, unable to feel full/hungry
- Unable to regulate appetite; has little to no appetite and/or will be "starving" one minute then full two bites later, then back to hungry again (prone to eating disorders and/or failure to thrive)