

Each sensory processing pattern has strengths and challenges, and at times these patterns can support or interfere with things your child(ren) or you need to do or want to do.



Avoiders

Overwhelmed, bothered by and avoid input.



© Blooming Abilities. All rights reserved.

Strengths:

- Takes action to try to meet sensory needs
- Enjoys to play same games and activities in the same way
- Likes to be "in charge" or "in control" of activities
- Enjoys being a leader/director (telling others what to do)
- Can spend lots of time on preferred activities.
- Notice things that others don't notice.
- Like to make plans and follow the plan.
- Likes being alone, can isolate themselves
- Prefers quiet places and retreats (e.g. tent)
- Will run away or hide (e.g. under table/desk)
- Can be described as stubborn or controlling
- May disengaged in group activities
- Notice more and is bothered more by things around them

Challenges:

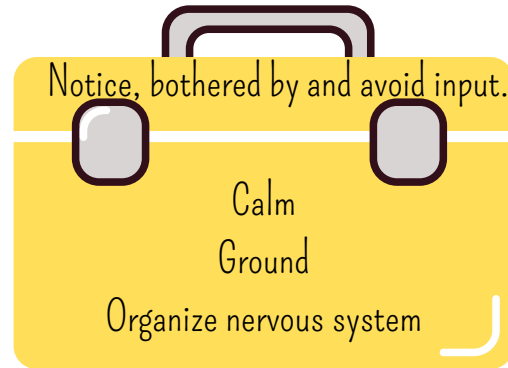
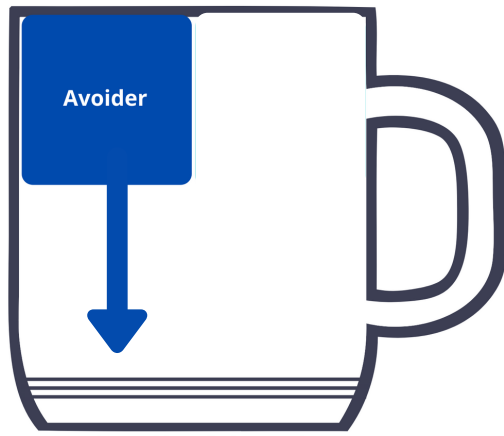
- May become upset if plans or routines are changed
- May retreat when overwhelmed
- May flee in new or unexpected situations – can happen quickly (e.g. fight, flight, freeze)
- Withdraws when environment is too challenging
- Shut down if environment is too much (refusal)
- Perceive new sensations as confusing and/or harmful
- Withdraw or flee when they are overwhelmed or don't feel safe.
- Cover ears (if noise bothers them) or hide (to seek safety).
- Turn body away from you or run away.
- Look away when you are talking.

NOTICE:

Possible triggers.

What is calming and supportive.

Tools to Try:



- Reduce input - less is more
- Provide structure (e.g. visuals)
- Routines & predictability
- Retreat options
- Have LESS input in the environment
- Use tools to calm and decrease stress
- Find ways to remove or block input that bothers them. (e.g. if noise bothers a child – allow them to wear noise-cancelling headphones or help choose the kind of music for the background)
- Eliminating background noises may be helpful
- Explore changes to the environment to for consistency
- Predictable and consistent environments are supportive, helps child feel safe & life feels more manageable
- Reduce unfamiliar sensory input, or prepare child
- Provide opportunities to take breaks and retreat (e.g. cozy corner/tent)... before shut down!
- Use routines and predictability to help child manage.
- Provide LOTS of warning if there will be a change and support through the change.
- Allow child to help you create a supportive learning environment (e.g. less noise, or less visual distractions by working facing a wall or with a visual barrier between them & others)
- Create “getaway” or “retreat” spaces for safety
- Observe for specific triggers
- Observe when they have big reactions (what do they say/do)
- Offer choices so they feel in control
- Listen & honour their words

When the child is becoming over-stimulated or stressed (shutting down/flight, fright, freeze) try:

- Stop talking
- Pause everything and focus on creating calming environment
- Support what child needs (e.g. allow to retreat if needed)
- Give plenty of space