

Sensory Processing Difficulties

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Tactile

Over-Responsive

1. Strips off clothing
2. Frequently adjusts clothing as if it binds or is uncomfortable.
3. Sensitive to seams in clothes, tags, or certain clothing textures
4. Indicates distress when barefoot
5. Fights being dressed or undressed
6. Enjoys mostly soft textured clothing
7. Resists grooming in any of the following
 - a. face washing
 - b. hair combing
 - c. hair cutting
 - d. tooth brushing
 - e. nail trimming
 - f. hair washing
8. Dislikes bathing
9. Avoids/dislikes messy things on face or hands (ie sand, dirt, fingerpaints, glue, playdough, chalk, food, etc.)
10. Overly sensitive to unexpected touch
11. Withdraws or hits when peers reach toward or are nearby
12. Rubs spot after being touched
13. Avoids palm/hand contact with objects or people
14. Prefers to cuddle/hug on own terms
15. Seems to have increased response to pain, overly aware of cuts and bruises
16. Prefers to play alone, away from other children
17. Displays a strong need to touch objects or people
18. Dislikes crowds, busy places
19. Mouths objects or clothing
20. Prefers to be in corner, under table, behind furniture

Oral:

21. Spits out/rejects certain food textures
22. Picky eater – dislikes many foods
23. Gags easily with food textures/utensils in mouth
24. Sensitive to temperatures in food

Under-Responsive

1. Shows decreased awareness of being touched
2. Decreased awareness if clothes are poorly adjusted
3. Delayed, little or decreased response to pain
4. Displays a strong need to touch objects or people
5. Seeks oral input through mouthing objects, chewing on objects or clothing
6. Unaware food is on mouth when eating – messy eater
7. Drops carried objects and doesn't know it

Self-Regulatory Behaviors (seeking tactile input) :

- Engages in persistent hand to mouth activity
- Mouths objects or clothing
- Persistently has hand in pants or pants pockets
- Sits on hands/feet
- Pushes or rubs body against objects/walls/people
- Insists on holding an object in hand
- Rubs fingers against hand or other fingers
- Self-injurious behaviors present – pinches, bites self, hits, slaps, etc.

Vestibular

Over-Responsive

1. Becomes anxious or distressed when the body leaves the ground (doesn't like feet off the ground, upside down positions, climbing, etc.)
2. Dislikes or fears excessive movement activities such as swings, rides, roughhousing, etc.
3. Acts cautious about gross motor movement, playground equipment, trying new movement experiences
4. Becomes overly excited after movement
5. Experiences frequent car sickness
6. Dislikes when someone bumps them or moves them off balance
7. Has a fear of heights
8. May not like rocking/bouncing
9. Prefers to be upright

Under-Responsive

1. Props head or leans when sitting or standing
2. Collapses onto furniture
3. Loses balance easily
4. Clumsy-falls or trips often
5. Seems lethargic or slow to respond to movement demands
6. Prefers sitting or sedentary activities
7. May crave fast and spinning movements
8. Moves constantly, rocks, or fidgets
9. Enjoys being upside down
10. Poor endurance, tires easily
11. Has slow or no protective responses

Self-Regulatory Behaviors (increasing vestibular input) :

- Rocks body
- Wags head
- Rotates or twirls body
- Waves or flicks fingers near eyes
- Paces
- Has spurts of running

Proprioception

Over-Responsive

1. Locks joints to stabilize movement
2. Rigid in movement

Under-Responsive

1. Weak grasp
2. Poor endurance for activities
3. Hangs onto objects for support
4. Difficulty lifting heavy objects
5. Clumsy/awkward in movement
6. Is awkward getting on or off equipment or chairs
7. Difficulty grading movement or pressure (knocks things over, under/over shoots target, grasp too tight on objects or too loose, difficulty being gentle, difficulty pouring accurately)
8. Acts hard on toys (bangs a lot, throws, forceful with toys)
9. Uses high stepping when ascending/descending stairs
10. Difficulty with dressing
11. Moves heavily, clapping feet with each step
12. Feels limp, like a “sack of potatoes” when being moved by someone else
13. Has poor posture – may have tendency to slide off supporting surfaces

Self-Regulatory Behaviors (increasing proprioceptive input):

- Flaps hands, clasps, jumps, stamps to an unusual degree
- Toe walks
- Pulls against objects clenched in mouth
- Presses or bangs heels or wrist
- Climbs in inappropriate places
- Pushes or leans heavily against people/furniture
- Grinds/clenches teeth
- Bites objects/others
- Butts head or body against wall
- Self-injurious - bangs head, slaps/hits self, bites hand/wrist/arm

Visual

Over-Responsive

1. Dislikes bright lights / sunlight
2. Covers eyes in brightly lit room or outside
3. Watches everyone when they move
4. Easily visually distracted
5. Avoids eye contact

Under-Responsive

1. Doesn't notice when people come into room
2. Difficulty finding objects in room, drawer, table
3. Picks up pictures or objects and looks very closely and carefully at them

Self-Regulatory Behaviors:

- Avoids eye contact
- Likes to watch objects spin for long periods
- Likes to watch flickering or blinking lights for long periods

Auditory

Over-Responsive

1. Overreacts to unexpected or loud noises
2. Dislikes, is afraid, or cries over certain sounds or noises in environment (vacuum cleaners, hair dryers, kitchen appliances, mowers, sirens, etc.)
3. Seems distracted by almost unnoticeable sounds i.e., refrigerator, fans, heaters, etc
4. Holds hands over ears when louder noises are present

Under-Responsive

1. Seems oblivious within an active environment
2. Seems confused about what directions sounds come from
3. Appears not to hear at times
4. Fails to listen, or pay attention to what is said to them
5. Makes loud noises frequently
6. Talks incessantly

Taste and Smell

Over-Responsive

1. Rigid about what to eat, doesn't like to try new foods
2. Finds many smells offensive

Under-Responsive

1. Says all food tastes the same
2. Explores environment by smelling everything
3. Taste non-food items before playing with them