

# Sensory Processing Challenges (Based on Senses)

HOW TO PREVENT SENSORY MELTDOWNS | IDENTIFYING YOUR CHILD'S SENSORY CHALLENGES

## Sense of Hearing (Auditory)

<b>HYPERSENSITIVE</b> (Overwhelmed)	<b>HYPOTENSITIVE</b> (Underwhelmed; Sensory-seeking)
Very light sleepers	Enjoys crowds, sirens, etc.
Gets distracted by background noise or sounds (i.e. sounds coming from refrigerators or lights, fans, clocks, or heaters)	Likes to stay in the noisiest places in the house (i.e. kitchen, bathroom)
Easily startled / distracted / frightened by sudden noises (i.e. baby crying, telephone ringing)	Create sounds -- tapping things, banging doors, crumpling/tearing paper, making loud rhythmic sounds using their voices
Hates thunderstorms and having a haircut	Does not hear or respond to speech and verbal cues (spaces out even when name is being called)
Runs away / cries and/or covers ears from loud noises	Unaware to some sounds
May like people according to the sound of their voices	Gets confused where sounds come from
Refuses to go to public places like parades, movie theaters, concerts, etc.	Talks loud even when in a task
Fearful of common sounds at home (i.e. toilet flushing, lawn mowing, vacuum cleaning)	Easily distracted / Cannot pay attention / Frequently disoriented
Often seeks for a quieter place (i.e. some frequently asks people to be stop talking, laughing, etc.)	Finds it difficult to understand and remember what was said ; Needs directions/instructions repeated; Will say "What?" frequently
May also make repetitive noises to block out other disturbing sounds	No vocalising/babbling (during infancy)

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## Sense of Sight (Vision)

<b>HYPER SENSITIVE</b> (Overwhelmed)	<b>HYPO SENSITIVE</b> (Underwhelmed; Sensory-seeking)
Easily bothered by bright lights and colours (Covers eyes, squinting, crying, gets a headache)	Watches everyone moving around him/her
Often gets watery eyes after watching TV or reading a book	Difficulty in identifying differences between printed letters, pictures, objects, symbols, and figures (similar to dyslexia and dyscalculia)
Enjoys playing in dark areas of the house	Focuses on details instead of the bigger picture
Avoids eye contact	Poor control over eye movement especially when tracking and following moving objects
Easily distracted and irritated with visual movement (i.e. doors, windows, toys, hanging decors etc.)	Loses place when doing visual tasks (i.e. reading, solving math problems, copying from a book)
Difficulty with focusing on tasks and will need a lot more time	Poor sense of space and location (i.e. confuses left and right, bumps into things, missteps stairs and curbs)
	Difficulty with copying shapes, cutting, tracing along lines, and jigsaw puzzles

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## Sense of Touch (Tactile)

<b>HYPER SENSITIVE</b> (Overwhelmed)	<b>HYPO SENSITIVE</b> (Underwhelmed; Sensory-seeking)
Gets anxious, scared, and/or aggressive with light, unexpected touch; Finds it difficult to stand close to other people	Seeks movements that often disrupt daily activities (i.e. fidgeting, can't sit still, running around)
Get distressed during grooming (i.e. hair cutting, nail clipping, teeth brushing, face washing)	Feels the need to touch everything and everyone
Excessively ticklish; Avoid being barefoot or in contact with sand, grass, mud, water, playdoh, slime, etc.	May be self-injurious or self-abusive (i.e. biting, pinching, cutting, head-banging); usually shows no distress with shots, cuts, and bruises (high pain tolerance)
Refuses to wear clothes with certain textures; dislikes seams of socks (may vary according to child's unique preferences)	May frequently hurt other children or pets while playing
Gets distressed with dirty hands; avoids "messy" play	Enjoys and seeks out messy play but may also not be aware that hands/face/feet are dirty
Picky eater – only likes certain tastes and textures; resists trying new food	Chews, bites, or "mouths" on objects excessively
Often prefers hugs than kisses; some hates being held or cuddled at all	Prefers excessively spicy, sweet, sour, or salty foods
Dislikes certain textures of material (i.e. blankets, fur of stuff animals, rugs, socks, etc.)	Craves vibrating objects or objects that provide strong sensory input
Overreacts to minor cuts, scrapes, and bug bites	Interrupted play – jumps from one activity to another

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## Sense of Taste (Gustatory)

<b>HYPERSENSITIVE</b> (Overwhelmed)	<b>HYPSENSITIVE</b> (Underwhelmed; Sensory-seeking)
Very picky with food (limited food preferences, brands, new foods, etc.)	Prefers flavorful foods or foods with intense flavors (i.e. too spicy, too sweet, too sour, etc.)
May often prefer "soft" or pureed foods even after 2 years old	May like to lick or chew on non-food items (i.e. dirt, crayons, etc.); may like to put objects in mouth (past toddler years)
Prefers hot or cold foods	Excessive drooling (kids beyond teething stage)
Likes bland-tasting foods (avoids salty, spicy, sweet, etc)	Prefers vibrating toothbrushes and getting dentist check-ups
Can't stand toothpaste, mouthwash, and refuses to have dental work done	Sometimes complains about all foods tasting the same
May gag with highly-textured foods	May difficult to get enough of condiments, spices, seasonings on food

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## Sense of Smell (Olfactory)

HYPER SENSITIVE (Overwhelmed)	HYPO SENSITIVE (Underwhelmed; Sensory-seeking)
Very picky eater – may refuse to eat certain foods because of their smell	May not notice identifying unpleasant odors
Easily nauseated by hygienic odors (i.e. bathroom scents, perfume, cologne etc.)	May drink or eat poisonous things due to the inability to identify its smell
Can't stand some cooking smells	Excessive use of smelling or uses his/her sense of smell to interact when introduced to new objects, places, or people
May prefer friends based on their body scent/ smell	

## Sense of Movement (Vestibular / Proprioception)

Very hyperactive usually for long hours-- jumping, crashing activities, bumping, squishing, wrestling	Jumping, crashing activities, bumping, squishing, wrestling
Kicking feet on things when seated	Likes tight, bear hugs
Likes tight, bear hugs	<p>May not be able to discriminate and/or modulate movement such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Weight (heavy or light),</li> <li>● Speed (walking fast),</li> </ul> <p>Strength (too much force on everything like slamming doors, often hurting pets when playing with them)</p>
May intentionally fall oneself on	Often breaks objects or toys

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the floor frequently	
Hits or pushes other kids	Kicking feet on the chair or on the floor while seated
May prefer doing a lot of things at a time (i.e. chewing on pen, grinding on teeth, banging on toys while seated)	May like to move objects around the house

## Social and Emotional Challenges

Easily gets frustrated
Usually impulsive
Cannot properly express feelings and needs
Difficulty with accepting changes (i.e. daily routine)
Self-abusive and can be abusive to others as well
Cannot interpret other people's cues, needs, and emotions
Does not usually connect and relate with others; difficulty in making new connections
Prefers isolation and often withdrawn from the group (Other kids can function well in smaller groups or individually)
Cannot imitate how others play
Wandering around the playroom without aim or purpose; constant exploration without a goal

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Can be very repetitive for hours
Easily irritated and fussy
Distressed from sleeping to awake
Constantly needs excessive help from others



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