



SENSORY RED FLAGS

All people may display degrees of these behaviors; it is when the behavior starts affecting our **functioning** that it becomes a concern. People can be over- or under-responsive to different types of sensory stimulation to different degrees, which may cause them to seek out or avoid different sensations. If you have any sensory concerns for your child it is important to get an assessment from a licensed Occupational Therapist. Sensory processing issues can impact a child's ability to participate in their social and academic environment.

Touch

- avoids messy play like painting and sand play
- can be overly controlling, particularly about how group activities are done and what other children are doing
- seems not to notice when hands get dirty or when there is food around their mouth
- seeks out all sorts of messy play and often gets stuck on this type of play
- obsesses about their clothing or has very particular clothing choices
- has trouble keeping hands to themselves
- has difficulty in close group situations

Movement & Balance

- craves movement and has difficulty staying in their seat
- loves swings, slides, trampolines, and rough and tumble play
- dislikes movement play: avoids swings and climbing up onto an apparatus or playground, appears afraid of heights and of feet leaving the floor making them overly anxious
- has poor balance and seems unaware of falling; often failing to catch self
- complains often of feeling dizzy or ill after playing on swings
- never seems to become dizzy despite seeking out spinning movement
- often slumps over the desk or props themselves up on arms to support self

Body Position & Force

- frequently clumsily knocks into things and other people
- appears uncoordinated for age
- applies too much or too little force
- breaks toys easily
- plays roughly with peers
- appears to tire easily, be passive, or even lethargic

Auditory / Language Processing

- covers ears or become distressed when there are loud noises
- has good hearing but often seems to miss what is being said or has "selective hearing"
- craves loud noise - turning up music, shouting instead of talking, banging toys to make percussion sounds, etc.
- appears to have difficulty understanding instructions
- tends to repeat instructions to themselves

Visual Processing

- struggles to focus when there is too much to look at, peering around and getting distracted or struggling to find items on their desk
- may seem particularly light sensitive, often covers eyes, or complains of bright lights
- appears not to see things, walks into objects in their path, does not notice approaching objects, has difficulty with hand-eye coordination games, or seems to stare a lot before responding
- becomes fixated on visually stimulating objects, like fans, flickering lights, or screens

Emotional Regulation

- does not accept changes in routine easily
- becomes easily frustrated
- acts out behaviorally, has difficulty getting along with others
- displays marked mood variations
- displays frequent outbursts or tantrums
- tries to control others, activities, or different settings