

Sensory Processing Disorder



Taking a flight with kids is hard enough! Flying with a child with Sensory Integration takes special planning! Sensory Processing Disorder/Sensory Integration (SPD) occurs when the nervous system has difficulty regulating, processing, and interpreting information from one or more of the senses. Different children perceive and process sensory information differently. Some children find loud noises scary, while others like to bang objects and search for interesting ways to create noise. Similarly, some children may only tolerate certain fabrics or textures for clothing, while others may enjoy rolling around in grass, sand, or on the carpet. All children and adults have different sensory preferences, and while most adults have learned to adapt to their specific needs, some children need guidance in processing sensory information to reach their full potential.

8 Tips for Flying with a Child with SPD:

1. Bring noise canceling headphones.
2. Make sure your child has slept and is well fed prior to the flight so he or she is regulated.
3. Be prepared with food and water during the flight, especially if the flight is long.
4. Bring a heavy object to help calm your child. Examples include a book, laptop, or a weighted blanket or vest.
5. Try to schedule your flight during nap time or at night if your child is able to sleep comfortably on planes. If the flight is during the day, try and have your child run around and use his or her energy before the flight.
6. Gum chewing or sucking on a lollipop may be helpful to help regulate your child.
7. Have activities ready for the plane. It can be a good time to practice fine motor skills.
8. Create a visual schedule for your child. Include everything from driving to the airport, waiting in the terminal, taking off, eating snacks to landing and getting luggage. This way your child will be prepared and feel less anxious about what to expect.