



Suggested Strategies for Supporting Children with Sensory Differences

Sensory processing

Sensory processing refers to how we use the information provided by all of the senses within our body and from our environments. There are 2 different sets of senses. The 'Far' senses, where the brain receives information from outside the body (sight, sound, taste, touch and smell) and the 'Near' senses, where the brain receives information from the body itself (proprioception, vestibular and interoception)

All of the information is received, processed and integrated to give us an understanding of who we are, where we are and what is happening around us.

When our senses are integrated correctly we are able to respond appropriately to the sensation. However, some children will experience sensory differences because of the way the information is received by their brains. Each child could have a different sensory profile. For example, a child may be over-sensitive (hyper) to sound but under-sensitive (hypo) to touch. East Kent Therapy Services 'The Pod' Occupational Therapy <https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/childrens-therapies-the-pod/occupational-therapy/sensory-processing/> provide a short film that explains this.

Individuals with Autism may over- or under-react to different things. They might be getting too much information because their senses are hyper or not getting enough information because their senses are hypo. Generally speaking, those people who are hyper sensitive will try and avoid the sensations that are causing them difficulty and those who are hypo sensitive will try and seek out the sensations they are missing.

Well-being

Some children will experience challenges with emotional regulation, anxiety and stress. For very young children it might not be easy for them to tell their adults how they are feeling. In times of distress, children's sensory differences can become more apparent and the child becomes overwhelmed with what is happening around them. In understanding what is happening to them, we can put in place strategies that can help them feel safe, secure and calm.

Within this document we suggest some possible ways to help young children. Remember, their profile is as individual as they are and these are in no way exhaustive.

Vision -Sight

Hyper-sensitive - what you might see

- Behaviour of child becomes more erratic in a more visually stimulating environment.
- Is visually distracted by others.
- Notices everything that's happening in the room.
- Child keeps head and eyes facing downwards most of the time.
- Startle at visual input.
- Show a sensitivity to light.
- Be irritated by bright lights.
- Prefer sunglasses/peak cap.

Hypo-sensitive - what you might see

- Child may not notice details in pictures.
- Child may have difficulty distinguishing the foreground from the background, for e.g. find an object when it is hidden amongst others in a drawer.
- Shows a lack of attention to environment/people
- Often misses visual cues

Difference Identified	Suggestions:
Extended eye gaze.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A routine check-up at the optician may eliminate any visual difficulties.• Use of a magic photo frame could be useful to help the child focus on the movement of the picture and therefore break the gaze
Focuses on a tiny part of an object rather than the bigger picture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work/play with child in a distraction free area.• Avoid busy backgrounds in books and ensure marks are erased from whiteboards before writing/drawing on them.

<p>Fascinated by tiny threads on the carpet or small patterns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place a large play mat/cloth on the floor to discourage thread pulling this will help the child focus on the toy or task in hand. • Expose child to small sensory play activities such as playing with grains of rice or using rice to make collages etc.
<p>Comments on things we may not see (e.g. pattern resembling something else).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tune into your child and encourage them to point to what they can see. This will help you to understand what they are focusing on.
<p>Holds objects close to his/her eye.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the child isn't suffering from short sight vision. • Some children find holding their toys closely to their eye helps them to filter out any irrelevant information and focus on what is important to them.
<p>Holds objects in peripheral vision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again, your child may find it clearer looking at this particular angle, so just gentle encouragement to help them focus on the bigger picture gradually without causing too much overload of information.
<p>Gets excited by flashing lights on toys.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting flashing light toys to use as motivators for short periods. • Avoid strobe lighting, especially those that flicker

<p>Stares at fluorescent lighting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory rooms are useful and often relaxing for children that stare at lights. Interaction using switches and voice activated light boards can be useful to encourage less solitary play.
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<p>'Stims' on reflective surfaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure any laminated visuals are made using matt laminating pouches as some children can get stuck on the reflection of the card rather than focusing on the picture itself. • Fixing pictures to hard card or board can also refrain a child from flicking the symbols instead of looking at what they are informing them about. • Allow periods of sensory play using fibre-optic lights and mirror play ensuring time has a limit to it so child doesn't become too stimulated by them.
<p>Comments on external pattern e.g. every bump or line in the road</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes this can cause anxiety especially where there is a mix on surfaces to cross, if a child struggles to walk over two joining surfaces, it may be appropriate to invest in a plain carpet runner to cross over these and give the child a clear run on where to walk. • Using footprints also helps the child to feel directed.
<p>Is startled by clouds casting shadows over the room/ground</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid sitting child by a window. • Fitting a blackout blind to bedroom window may help. • Fitting a blind to setting window may help the child to feel more in control of sunlight/clouds.
<p>Stares out of the windows/ attracted to natural daylight.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sun lamps and sensory room activities are useful motivating activities. • Use of a blind can help adult control when child becomes distracted.
<p>Likes fast motion in films or physical games.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use this to your advantage! This is a brilliant way to engage with a child with autism in rough and tumble games. Gradually building in slower and less physical interaction e.g. round and round the garden etc.
<p>Likes to see toys spinning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporated spinning in play activities gradually expanding activities e.g. roll it down then....spin until less emphasis is on the spinning and more emphasis in on the function the toy should serve.

Auditory - Hearing

Hyper-sensitive - what you might see

- Child over-reacts to loud noise, thunder, vacuum cleaner, hairdryer, fire drills or sudden noises.
- Child often places their hands over their ears.
- Child appears less able to concentrate or focus in a noisy environment.
- Child makes own noises more persistently than peer group.
- Show frequent startle reactions to noise.
- Notice even small sounds.

Hypo-sensitive - what you might see

- Child doesn't seem to notice when their name is called.
- Child enjoys and seeks out loud or unusual noises more than peers.
- Has a disregard of sudden or loud noises.
- Does pay attention in a noisy environment/or to people.
- Show, delayed responses to noise.
- Makes noise by tapping, humming, whistling etc.
- Need noise to increase their levels of alertness.

Difference Identified	Suggestions:
Runs from household noises (hairdryer, washing machine).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre warn the child where possible e.g. that you are going to switch the washing machine on.• Visually identifying the sound source can often ease the anxiety and eventually seeing if the child will tolerate touching it or turning it on.• Encouraging child to stay at a distance but in the same room, perhaps by using a pop-up tent as a hide out, so they can still see and feel protected at the same time.

<p>Blocks ears when in the hairdressers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing the child to wear earphones in the hairdressers with a familiar piece of music on can help to drown out the sound of the clippers or hairdryers. • Informing the hairdressers that using scissors may be more helpful to your child. • Read books/watch Youtube clips about visiting the hairdressers so they know what to expect.
<p>Blocks ears at unexplained times.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that overhead strobe lighting isn't buzzing as some children with autism can hear very slight noises and become distracted or distressed by them. • Ensure one adult at a time is talking to them as your child may just be trying to drown out too many sounds coming in at one time and have difficulty processing them all.
<p>Hums and covers ears.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again known as 'blocking' auditory overload can mean that too many sounds and thoughts are happening at too faster speed in order for the child to process. • Use a distraction free area and turn off the T.V. and start again! • Speak at a slower rate and slightly increase your volume if you want to get their attention.
<p>Holds toys to ear and has volume on high.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate hearing impairment by asking for a referral to an audiologist. • Encourage child to turn up the volume but keep the toy at a safe distance not to damage the ear.
<p>Doesn't appear to hear you when being spoken to.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once hearing impairment has be eradicated apply above strategy e.g. ensuring work/play in a distraction free area for short periods until child engages with your overtures. • Does your child recognise he is being spoken to? Does he respond to his name? Does he know what his name is? Basic work on identity such as using photographs and labelling his/her chair and picture books may help with this recognition. • Adult to approach child from the front and if not touch sensitive a gentle touch to the child's arm before speaking may help the child to focus his attention on you rather that the cars going past in the street! • You could try using auditory cues when you need their attention e.g. clapping.

<p>Easily distracted by a distant sound (fire engine).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being in tune with your child and verbally identifying the noise to the child as they occur can help to reassure them. • If in walking distance an impromptu walk around to the culprit, so the child can see where the noise is coming from can also be helpful.
<p>Easily startled by unidentifiable sounds (e.g. telephone).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again identifying where the noise is coming from and showing the child that it will stop helps the child understand that there is an end to the noise. • Playing simple role play games with the telephone etc and allowing the child to make the phone ring can also help to take the fear out of things. • Turning the ring tone down on the phone or moving the phone temporarily to another room and gradually bringing into the room the child plays over a period of weeks can also help to desensitise. • This desensitising approach can be used for other sounds that the child is fearful of.
<p>Gets 'high' from repetitive sounds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use an egg timer to show the child that an activity is soon going to finish to encourage the child to stop pressing sound toys over and over again. Limiting the sound before it over-stimulates the child.
<p>Gets frustrated by busy/noisy environments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gentle exposure to busy environments to retrieve child motivated objects e.g. visit to Tesco to buy a Thomas comic. • Use of earphones/hood/hat so child feels their ears are protected when child has to be exposed to longer periods of noisy activity. • Allow child to walk on the inside of the pavement when out in busy streets rather than near roadside close to fast noisy vehicles. • Consider either going to environments at times when you know they will be quieter. Or being the first in that environment (e.g. the dining hall) so that the noise/busyness builds up gradually. • If they have been overwhelmed in a noisy environment, let them have time in a quiet space to reset/recover.

<p>Places hand over people's mouths when they sing/talk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many people singing/talking at once can cause confusion. When child covers your mouth, stop talking and look around to see if someone else is also joining in. Remember to try to have one adult talking to the child at once. • Prepare the child if two people are going to sing at one time e.g. Mummy and Jo are singing today, 1, 2 people etc.
<p>Never alarmed by sudden noises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again ensure there isn't a hearing impairment by having a routine check by an audiologist. • Often children who aren't alarmed are tuning into something they find far more interesting! Try using exaggerated expression and higher tone to draw the child's attention to sudden sounds.
<p>Becomes anxious by loud, sudden noises (child screaming, balloon popping etc)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the loud noise through visual and verbal labelling can reassure e.g. "wow it's the balloon, look!" • Encourage the child to play with the object that makes the noise or watch you play with it. Create fun games like blowing up the balloon and letting it go, releasing a small squeaky bit of air out, or allowing the child to stay in control by stamping or using a cocktail stick to pop the balloons.

Tactile - Touch

Hyper-sensitive - what you might see:

- Avoidance of touch.
- Dislike of hugs.
- Child becomes very disorganised, over emotional and/or out of control if they experience games that involve a lot of touch e.g. rough and tumble.
- Child avoids messy play.
- Child prefers to wear long sleeves even though it is a very hot day.
- Child dislikes the textures of certain clothes or material on the skin e.g. labels, seams. Child dislikes walking barefoot on certain surfaces (grass, sand).

Hypo-sensitive- what you might see:

- Appears to have a dulled sense of touch.
- Doesn't register pain or react to cuts or bruises.
- Poor fine motor skills.
- Weak grip.
- Likes messy play more than most children.
- Likes rough n tumble activities more than most children.
- Seeks touching all objects.
- Poor body awareness.
- Child likes a lot of hugs.

Difference Identified	Suggestions:
Avoids holding hands with adult or other children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a no-pressure approach and allow child to watch from a distance when their peers are taking part in hand holding games.• See if the child will tolerate you holding on to their sleeve or arm.• Expose the child up to a variety of different tactile experiences e.g. wiggly toys, water play etc.

Withdraws from a cuddle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up fun interaction on a 1:1 with the child with no touching involved. • Experiment with a variety of different touch for example try a firmer hug rather than light touch or vice versa. • Use objects instead of 'skin to skin' contact e.g. roll a ball over their hand/body.
Finds a 'light touch' uncomfortable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use deep pressure massage techniques. • Try dance massage. Whereby a variety of sensory object/tools are explored on different areas of the upper body and hands, along to the rhythm and beats within the preferred piece of music. • Hot dog game; wrap them up tightly in a play mat or similar and add different motions for onions and sauce etc. • Warn them before touch
Seems ticklish every time touched without clothes on.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the above suggestions ensuring the child is fully clothed until they have built up trust with you. Gradually remove a sock or jumper. • Use firm touch. • Foot massage using a foot massager: • Warn them before touch.
Craves rough and tumble play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build more gentle play sequences into usual rough and tumble play. Include a wind down period in this play and gradually increase this time.
Holds people tightly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide deep pressure at other times. • Use a tight blanket for a hug. • Use 'hands down' and divert child to pressure toys for example squeeze balls with eyes in or encourage to press down on a beach ball. • Consider use of weighted lap or shoulder resources or a weighted blanket.
Strips off clothes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to detect what the issue is....are the tags rubbing? If so remove them. • Stick to familiar, acceptable clothing gradually introduce new garments for short periods. • Allow clothes free periods at home. A run around naked after a bath/in bed?

Finds some clothes uncomfortable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above but make a note of the clothes he/she won't wear. • Wearing a fitted vest or body stocking can sometimes help to comfort the child against irritating fabrics.
Won't tolerate loose clothes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually begin to slightly loosen familiar clothing. • Some children feel more secure when they have tighter fitting under garments on such as a Lycra body suit.
Gets hot very easily.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure child's work/sleep area is not near to warm pipes or a radiator. • Social story on taking off their jumper when hot. • Visuals systems to highlight the right time to wear a jumper/coat.
Distressed when cold.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure work/sleep environment isn't near a cold open window. • Again as above for visual systems and social story.
Craves heat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide child with periods of time when he/she can access safe forms of heat e.g. Wheatie microwave teddy, play with warm spaghetti, warm water play.
Has a fear of going out in the rain/wind.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give child a coping strategy to talk themselves through. "Coat on, hat on, car then heater on..." • Provide child with ears muffs and umbrella. • Headphones with favourite music sometimes helps.
Needs to be wrapped up tight to sleep.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy duvet. • Sheets tucked in. • Wear tighter pyjamas. • Use of a sleeping bag.
Finds nappy change distressing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure mat is not cool and place a towel underneath the child when changing them. • Determine if the child requires a firm or light touch and use single quick movements • Join activity with something positive that the child enjoys, such as a familiar song

Senses slight wet mark on clothes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play messy games such as water fights and splashing in the puddles where it is acceptable to get wet. • Show child a solution if they get wet they can swap their top for an identical one, dry it off on the radiator then change it back.
Scratches away tears when upset.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage child to press face with a tissue instead of scratching. • Use doll play to model this technique, if child isn't able to tolerate it himself at the beginning.
Doesn't show distress when hurt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposing the child to different variations of touch e.g. light and firm will help the child to learn to identify these different sensations.
Walks on tip-toes when bare foot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foot massage. • Tac Pac using a variety of different objects on the feet e.g. brush, feather, ball, carpet square. • Foot painting/printing activities
Walks on tip-toes on certain surfaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above. • Identify surfaces then incorporate similar textures into a foot massage/play session. Feet painting. • Bare foot play in soft play/sand etc.
Runs sand through fingers continually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with different texture - foam, wet sand, water. • This may be a visual need so therefore encouraging the child to watch it fall in other ways may help. For example through a sieve, in a mill etc.
Avoids messy play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate familiar toys into messy play. Use a car in the paint tray. • Allow children to use tools so they are not touching the messy materials directly Do foot painting with Barbie's feet! • Let them wear gloves? Put messy materials in zip lock clear bag so they are not touching them directly (e.g. different colour paints to mix up) • Provide clear visual reassurance that they can wash their hands when they need to (e.g. do the activity by the sink).

Plays with/fascination with silky material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow 'silk' time throughout their day. • Attach a silk square to their clothes. • Increase exploration of other materials/objects.
Rubs objects over face/body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn this motion into a game - imitate the child - gain their eye contact - and move game on gradually to "car down my leg and into the garage!" • Find similar sensations to use at other times. Rub a special piece of fabric/toy or massager.

In addition:

- Give more opportunities to experience activities that involve increased feeling through the skin. e.g. a Duplo activity where the child is finding pieces in a box of other Duplo is better than playing on a 'games' console or similar device.
- Play 'What's in the Box/bag'. Introduce a number of objects previously seen by the child into a box or bag where they cannot see. They have to find the object you ask for.
- Sand play and messy play is useful. Find hidden objects without vision.

Olfactory (Smell) & Gustatory (Taste)

Hyper-sensitive - what you might see

- Becomes anxious by the smell of food cooking.
- Gags on smell of someone else's food close by
- May become distressed if you have changed deodorants, perfume, washing powder etc.,
- Prefers bland soft food
- Avoids brushing teeth

Hypo-sensitive - what you might see

- Seeks out strong smells
- May smear faeces
- Sniffs people

Difference Identified	Suggestions:
Becomes anxious by the smell of food cooking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare child visually when dinner is soon to be prepared.• Play a smell game, where your child can learn to smell individual pieces of food and label them, this may help your child to remember the different smells.
Gags on smell of someone else's food close by	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage child to smell food related activities e.g. snack time, highlight the smell of the blackcurrant juice and another child's special biscuits. Make it a positive think "mmm this biscuit smells sweet!"
Sniffs people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage child to sniff adult's wrists often this helps to identify the person better due to fragrances worn. It is also more appropriate to sniff here!
Comments inappropriately of people's aroma	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alongside the above begin to highlight another significant attribute that person has or wears, so eventually identifying the adult by their jewellery or watch is more important than their fragrance.

Puts objects up his/her nose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show child appropriate distance to hold things when smelling them. • Allow them to smell different fragrances on large pieces of fabric to ensure tiny pieces can't get lost up their noses.
Smells toys before playing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show them other ways of identifying the toys e.g. by texture. Although this is not a bad way of identifying a toy as long as it again isn't too small and could be inhaled! • Use scratch and sniff books during activity times. • Encourage writing skills by using fragrant pens/crayons.
Smells own faeces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace desire to smell own faeces with other highly fragrance materials e.g. whilst changing nappy allow him/her to hold a ball of strong smelling play-dough or fragrance washable toy

Eats non-food items (glue etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When child attempts to bite into a non-food item intervene and replace with a small food item. • Have a small box with seal to encourage child they only must eat edible items. • If child simply wants to bite on a toy but not swallow they should be directed to a special box of chewable toys (teethers, rings) each time they put a toy in their mouth that shouldn't be chewed.
Overfills his/her mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may be a sign of hypo-sensitivity in the mouth, where a child simply cannot sense his mouth has food in it until it's packed full. A Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) may be able to advise on this.
Dribbles excessively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again this could be a sign of hypo-sensitivity or oral dyspraxia so it is best to liaise with the child's SALT to eliminate a possible diagnosis.
Chews/mouths everything	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child could simply still be at the exploratory stage of their play development and like very young children explore object through their mouths. Begin to teach the child to explore the toy through touching with their hands rather than their mouths.

Grinds teeth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure child hasn't got any dental problems, a referral to a special dentist may be required.
Bites people around him/her for no apparent reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage people to approach child slowly from the front, ensuring they do not touch the child as they may be experiencing too much overload from the adult e.g. touch, lack of space as well as demand. • Allow child to wear a small rubber ring/chewytube that they can divert to if they feel the need to bite.
Finds it hard to co-ordinate mouth when speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again this may be a sign of oral dyspraxia and investigations by the child's SALT may be required. • This could also be a sign of immaturity of language skills and simply require support with speech and language targets.
Licks objects/people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverting the child to a different way of identifying people around them through touch or smell may reduce this. • Provide activities/objects that they can 'legitimately' lick
Appears unaware of small pieces of food in her/his mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again this is an area which may be due to oral motor coordination dysfunction or hypo-sensitivity in the mouth and advice should be obtained from a SALT. • Use of a mirror to show child that they have a piece of food in their mouth could also be useful as often children need to see something to understand it is there.
Eats specific food only (dry, sloppy etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gentle taste tests, where child can be offered very small pieces of certain foods in between their favourites. • There should be no pressure to eat the new foods. • Allow them to explore/play with them without necessarily eating them. • Clear away any uneaten food without fuss or comment. • Experimental play with various food materials e.g. wet spaghetti play, dry crunched up crisps etc. • Involve the child in some cookery activities - this can be with real food or through role-play

Regurgitates dry foods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the child with a drink to help them tolerate dry food or by accompanying their foods with a side portion of sauce appears to aid swallowing dry foods.
Finds cleaning teeth uncomfortable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A visit to the dentist or referral to specialist dentist may be helpful to rule out any dental problems causing discomfort. • Playing fun imitation games such as "this is the way we clean our teeth on a Monday morning" • Experimentation with a variety of different tooth- brushes, manual or electric. Also theme brushes may prove more interesting for the child e.g. Thomas or Bob the Builder. • Experiment with different toothpastes also, in case the flavour of the toothpaste is causing distress.

Proprioception / Vestibular - Movement and body sense

Hyper-sensitive - what you might see

- Child is fearful of movement.
- Child dislikes escalators or lifts.
- Child does not like playing on playground equipment.
- Child may be travel sick.
- Dislike head tilted back e.g. hair washing, rough and tumble.

Hypo-sensitive - what you might see

- Child is always 'on the go' more than their peers.
- Child appears to take excessive risks e.g. shows no fear when jumping from a big height.
- Appears over forceful perhaps damaging toys unintentionally.
- Walking into others whilst looking ahead.
- Tripping over.
- Falling from chairs.
- Poor fine motor skills compared to peers - difficulties with precision movements.
- Poor body awareness

Difference Identified	Suggestions
Climbs in excess	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divert child to more appropriate large play equipment when shows a desire to climb. • Move legs to pieces of music or during rhymes.
Seeks rocking motion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage child in lap play e.g. row the boat, going to the seaside, roly-poly song etc. • Use of a large child sized ball (gym ball) encourage child to lay body over it and push back and forth with feet on the floor to encourage rocking motion. Again use of a song can help to keep them engaged.
Is travel sick in car/trolley/buggy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place a hard surface under child's feet in car/whilst sitting/use foot plates in a buggy to encourage the feeling of stability. Allow child to sit in middle seat when in the back of the car so they are able to focus their vision forward. • Ensure child is sitting in their seat firmly and isn't feeling insecure due to a loose car seat/straps in buggy. • Avoid big unexpected movements.
Spins self around	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play games where spinning is part of the fun! E.g. ring a roses, pin the tail on the donkey! • Read books with actions that involve swirling around e.g. we're going on as bear hunt' • Set limits.

Anxious when not in control of own movements (being picked up, swing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise fast angular movements during fun interaction that the child already tolerates e.g. pick up then tickles! • Teach child to use their feet to activate equipment and become in control e.g. sitting and pushing along a skateboard, swinging self on a swing. • Using a space hopper.
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Constantly on the move	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide child with regular bursts of gross motor play. Use of soft-play/run around in between sit down sessions/bounce on a trampoline.
Swings arms from high bars (curtain rails/fans etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pulling and pushing activities using appropriate materials e.g. Lycra bands. • Close supervision on climbing frame equipment. • As with other strategies if swings on inappropriate equipment remove and retrain child to divert to appropriate materials.
Moves around the outskirts of activities, avoids busy movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually encourage one other child into his/her chosen area and facilitate quite low key non-threatening games. • Provide the child with a safe haven to go to if the setting is becoming too much to cope with (use of a pop-up tent?) but encourage short periods of time with a small group to begin to desensitise the child to the activities.
Prefers low-key activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow child to play with low key activities alongside a busier group for short periods. • Allow child to be a spectator on more active play with no pressure to join in but an open invitation.
Can't negotiate around obstacles in her way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place the odd obstacle in the child's area to allow the child to acknowledge these items and learn to guide himself around them. • Play games where the child has to negotiate their way around an obstacle course, using stepping stones and different surfaces.
Likes to fall or jump	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate games using jumping and falling motions e.g. ten green bottles, 5 little speckled frogs. • Use a trampoline.
Shows no sense of danger when climbing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure safety by diverting climbing to appropriate play equipment and reinforcing 'No climbing here'.

<p>Locks joints when naked or prefers to be in the foetal position</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support body when changing nappy (hard cushion/bean bag to lay body in). • Help the child relax by singing action songs when changing for bed. Encourage the child to join in with movements.
<p>Bangs/bounces on the floor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer this behaviour to play equipment e.g. bang the drum/bag the beach ball.
<p>Trips over own feet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again try co-ordination activities such as obstacle courses and walking on straight lines in a playground. • Reward at the end.
<p>Stands too close to others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use masked off areas when playing turn-taking games to show distance required. So the child can visualise where it is appropriate to sit. Plastic hoops are useful for this, to define each person's space.
<p>Finds it difficult to cross from one area to another.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At home avoid flooring that changes from room to room. Continuous patterns are more helpful to children who find transitions difficult. • Otherwise mark these boundaries with obvious lines e.g. bright yellow tape to clearly define a difference in level or surface.
<p>Has difficulties with fine motor skills i.e. doing up buttons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage fun fine motor activity: Peeling stickers from a card/noise putty/threading/finger painting.

Introception - regulating the body's inner systems

Hyper-sensitive - what you might see

- Complains they can 'hear their heart pounding
- Appears very hungry or thirsty

Hypo-sensitive - what you might see

- May need reminding to eat and drink
- Is unaware of the need to go to the toilet or is fearful of bowel movements
- Is unable to regulate heat / cold so will wear inappropriate clothing for the season
- May be unaware of their emotions and the impact on their bodies (not picking up signals)
- May be unaware if they have hurt themselves, or where the pain is

Difference Identified	Suggestions:
Appears very hungry or thirsty all the time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce food/drinks portions, use a smaller plate/cup• Show them empty packet/container confirming all the food/drink has gone• Limit access to food by keeping it out of reach, using locks or visual such as no entry signs on fridges/cupboards, or not buying it all in the case of snack foods like crisps and chocolate• Create a food/drink timetable e.g. nursery, play, snack, play lunch etc and try and reduce the amount of food/liquid intake gradually
Needs reminders to eat/drink/use the toilet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide visual supports to remind them• Take them to the toilet regularly to familiarise them with the routine
Does not appear to understand if they are hot or cold	Show themselves in the mirror. Say 'I can see you are hot. Your face is red/ sweating. This is your body's way of telling you that you need to cool down'.
Worried about feeling 'their heart'	Show them everybody has the same heartbeat. Time it after exercise so they can see if gets fast. Work on breathing exercise

<p>Unable to understand their or others emotions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use photographs and books of different emotions • Point out other children's emotions 'in the moment' • 'Feedback' children's emotions to them "I can see you are feeling... because" • Talk about how the body reacts to different emotions, such as when we are angry etc.
<p>Unaware of pain</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of this in regard to child's safety • Educate all those that come into contact with child • Encourage tactile and messy play

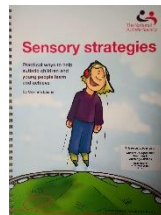
Sources:

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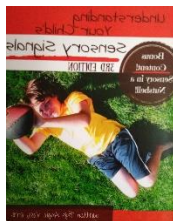
Leicestershire Partnership NHS & Berkshire NHS

Recommended books:

- Sensory Strategies-Practical Ways to help autistic children and young people learn



By Corinna Laurie (NAS Publication)



- Understanding Your Child's Sensory Signals
By Angie Voss (available on Amazon)

