



Checklist & Evaluation for Sensory Processing Disorder

Each day we receive information from our senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, movement, body awareness, position in space) that is: (1) perceived, (2) analyzed, and then (3) interpreted by the brain to formulate the basis of learning. For some individuals, there is a breakdown in one or more phrases of sensory processing. This breakdown can cause problems in learning, development, and social interactions.

CHECKLIST

Difficulty with sensory processing can manifest in many ways including sensory seeking or avoiding behaviors, deregulated activity levels and emotions, or difficulties with praxis (the ability to conceive, organize and execute skills).

Below is a list of the ways sensory symptoms can be disordered:

1. Single Tract Processing / Inability to "Multitask": Temple Grandin calls this "mono-channel." Information can only be processed one sense at a time.
 - First smell, then taste, then touch, versus smell/taste/touch combined
 - Inability to multitask contributes to most "violations" (i.e., more than two foods should not be on a plate at one time; cheese is only OK if it's on bread, but not on hamburgers)
 - The inability to multitask might not be a direct result of sensory regulation/modulation difficulties, but rather part of a much larger deficit
2. Cross-Modal Associative Processing (Synesthesia): When one sensation (hunger) is processed, then interpreted as another sensation (feeling hot)
3. Collapsed Sensation: When sensations merge, collapse, or jump around (similar to dyslexia)
4. Hypo/Hyper Sensitivities: Information is processed as over-sensitive or under-sensitive

EVALUATION

Some people have a mixed reaction to stimuli or have a deregulated sensory system where some days they may appear over aroused whereas other days, they may appear under aroused. Most people have some degree of sensory defensiveness or deregulation. If your child has any of the symptoms below which interfere with daily living, you might want to have an occupational therapy evaluation.

Vision

Under-Aroused:

- May seek out repetitive patterns in the environment (i.e., ceiling tiles, dust particles, window panes, wall paper, static on the TV, etc.)
- May appear hyperactive always looking around
- May seek out strong visual stimuli such as
- May stick finger in eyes looking to alter vision
- May stare at the sun

Over-Aroused:

- May cry easily when taken out of familiar environment
- May become upset in environments that are highly visual
- May become upset when environments have multiple colors (one wall painted one color, another wall painted another)



- May close eyes at inappropriate times
- May avoid looking at the sun or squinting (for no apparent vision difficulty)

Taste / Smell

Under-Aroused:

- May seek strong foods (ketchup, peppers, cured meats, sour patch kids, pickles, etc.)
- May seek foods with rough textures (chips, dry cereal, etc.)
- May seek out strong smelling foods or objects (i.e., bleach, gasoline, play dough, etc.)

Over-Aroused

- May only eat the "white-colored-food" diet (bread, milk, cereal, basically anything that is bland)
- May resist feeding or putting utensils in mouth
- May avoid strong smelling activities (i.e., play dough, painting, etc.)

Hearing / Auditory

Under-Aroused:

- May seek out loud noises (such as screaming in the bathroom to hear echoes)
- May speak in a very loud voice, not realizing it
- May make senseless sounds with mouth
- May not react to loud noises (fire alarms, etc.)
- May listen intently to humming sounds (such as computer, fridge, dishwasher, washing machine, or other appliances)

Over-Aroused

- May seek quiet spaces
- May cover ears with loud noises or noises with alternative currents (i.e., vacuum, sirens, certain lights, etc.)

Touch / Tactile

Under-Aroused:

- May bump or slam into everything (including people)
- When engaged in physical contact, may hug or hit, but not know how hard
- May engaged in self-injurious behavior for pleasure or may injure self without awareness of doing so (i.e., cuts, bruises, broken bones, etc.)
- Will not tolerate shoes/socks - needs to feel floor
- May sit between mattress or cushions on couch
- May request people lay on top of him/her

Over-Aroused:

- May cringe when being touched (or only cringing when touching certain body parts such as hands or knees)
- May display aggressive behavior when touched
- May not use hands effectively (avoiding holding objects, not grasping effectively, etc.)
- As an infant, laid still not wanting to explore environment
- As an infant or child, cries easily
- Will not tolerate bare feet
- Does not like the bathtub or shower
- Fussy about clothing (only will wear certain clothes or for sleeping, only certain sheets/blankets)