

What A Sensory Sensitivity May Look Like

Visual	Auditory	Tactile (touch)	Taste/Smell	Proprioceptive (difficulty interpreting sensations from muscles, joints, ligaments & tendons)	Vestibular (over or under sensitive to balance & movement sensations)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stares at spinning objects. • Spins their body • Turns opposite direction from where the teacher is lecturing • Demands to wear sunglasses indoors • Extremely organized or unorganized room (knows when an object has been slightly moved) • Loses place when reading • Gives no eye contact or looks beyond a person's face • Trouble locating desired toy on a cluttered shelf • Turns or tilts head when reading across a page • Misjudges spatial relationships so bumps into people or things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers ears for a fire drill or when the class is loud. • Runs from loud areas • Complains of noises in room or outside of window (ie lawn mower, student writing) • Covers ears in the cafeteria or cannot go into the gym when there are many people in it. • Doesn't like the sound of windshield wipers • Doesn't respond to verbal prompts when putting on noisy clothes • Talks louder than anyone else • Prefers loud music or none at all • Doesn't like the sound of a toilet being flushed/runs out of restroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throws arms back when about to be picked up by adult or pulls away when trying to hold child's hand • Is always hanging on adult or laying between his box spring and regular mattress • Avoids touching certain textures (fabrics, carpet, slime) • Preference for touching specific objects (silk) • Dislikes getting hands or meet messy • Touches everything in sight • Avoids being touched on the face/ hair/head (trouble with washing hair/face) (Hygiene) • Minimal, if any, reaction to pain such as cuts, bruises, or broken bones. • Bite their own skin • Reacts negatively when approached from behind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won't eat certain foods or eats extreme tasting foods (lemons/hot sauce) • Gags when told to eat food they don't like • Licks or tastes playdough or toys • Notices smells of perfume, cologne, onions, coffee, on individuals. • Smell everything • Won't visit certain environments due to the smell (zoo, farms, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pulls, twists, or chews on things • Leans, bumps, or crashes into objects • Walks along touching walls • Too much pressure when writing • Stands too close when talking to others • Walks stiff and uncoordinated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May seem to be a thrill seeker (jumping from high places, driving fast) • May be sedentary or cautious or hesitate to take risks • Difficulty coordinating movements of eyes • Trouble staying seated • Constantly leans head on hands or arms • Prefers to lie down than sit upright • Feels seasick when riding in a car, boat, train, airplane, escalator, or elevator • Extreme loose or tense grip on pencil or scissors • Enjoys being upside down • Easily loses balance when riding bike or climbing stairs

Suggestions for a Student with Sensory Sensitivity

Visual Ideas	Auditory Ideas	Tactile Ideas	Taste & Smell Ideas	Proprioceptive Ideas	Vestibular Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit visual materials hanging on ceiling/walls • Store manipulatives inside container • Organize/label all materials to identify where they belong • Put pictures on containers for those w/ poor visual memory • Use picture templates of where ideas belong in places • Tape a number/letter line on student desk • Provide primary lined paper or graph paper to help with spacing • Keep amount of visual info on worksheet to a minimum • Use a lamp instead of overhead fluorescents • Use a touch screen instead of computer mouse • Use computer software to organize material • Allow students to sit with back to teacher (looking at solid wall) • Have students write notes & use a peers' notes as well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize verbal directions • Use ear plugs or headphones • Allow time for students to listen to their favorite music • Use more visuals with pictures or words • Use social stories about what might happen or sounds that can be heard in the room • Desensitize a student to an area by slowly integrating him or her on numerous visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a student indicates that a touch hurts or pulls away, acknowledge their pain and stop touching • Experiment with types of clothing that are comfortable • Provide easy access to small hand fidgets • Allow students to sit in a different type of chair (bean bag, ball, video rocker, etc.) • Refer to the Occupational Therapist for additional ideas and resources (weighted vest, brushing utensils, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward students with foods that you know they like • Keep all poisonous substances locked up safely • Talk with a nutritionist about diet • Have a scented lamp, candle, lotions, liquid soap, scented markers or stickers available to smell to calm student • Be mindful of scented objects that a student may act adversely to • Use minimal amounts of perfume or cologne • Be aware of soaps and detergent use - use scent free laundry products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage students in up and down movements (jumping rope, bouncing a ball, trampoline) • Back and forth movements (swinging, sitting in a rocking chair, etc.) • Use stress balls, theraputty & fidget toys • Allow chewing on crunchy, chewy items (bubble gum, licorice, pretzels, carrots) • Designate an area in the room to stomp feet or pace • Never take PE or recess away from a student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create heavy work activities (carry around a backpack of books, take chairs down to computer lab, take out trash, etc.) • Slowly move from extreme positions (from sitting on the floor to standing) • Use bands across front legs of desk • Have student sit on wobble cushion or ball • Allow frequent breaks throughout the day • Have student jump on trampoline • Play games using repetitive alternating and rhythmic movements • Play on merry-go-round, hang upside down, swing, slide, etc.