# **SENSORY PROCESSING**

EDUCATIONAL HANDOUT

# What is sensory processing?

Sensory processing describes how we receive and respond to sensory input from the environment, such as noises and smells.

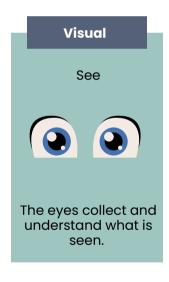
# Why is sensory processing important?

We receive information about the world through our sensory system. This includes sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, movement, and body position. Sensory processing is needed to engage in most child's activities, such as playing, eating, and dressing. Different sensation experiences help a child learn how to improve their skills with all activities. For example, a child can understand their surroundings by combining the information they receive from all their senses.

# What does research say?

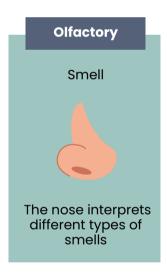
- Sensory processing skills support fine and gross motor, self-care, socialization, and emotional regulation skills.
- Children with sensory processing issues experience too much or little stimulation through their senses. They may feel uncomfortable and have trouble participating in activities.
- Adding sensory processing strategies into a child's daily life can lead to home and school success.

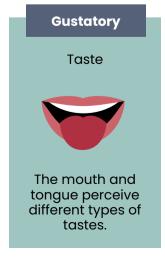
# Sensory processing involves the following different senses:



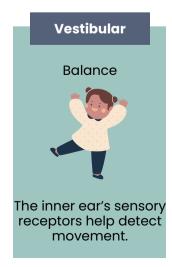












# A child with sensory processing problems may look like or experience:

- Overreaction to movement, sound, or touch
- Have low energy
- Clumsy
- Poor sleep
- Upset with self-care tasks, like washing hair, brushing teeth, and nail clipping
- Struggle with learning
- Seek a lot of movement
- Poor attention
- Picky eater
- Unsure how to play with other children
- Poor communication and social skills
- Avoid play equipment that involves movement, like slide or swings

# The following are some examples of sensory processing activities for children:

## Visual

- Play with sensory bottles
- Light up toys



## **Audtitory**

- Listen to music
- Wear noise cancellina



#### **Tactile**

- Finger paint
- Walk barefoot on grass
- Play with sand



## Olfactory

- Scented stickers
- Scented markers
- Scented dough



#### Gustatory

- Chew gum
- Blow party blowers
- Different types of foods



## **Proprioception**

- Climb on playground equipment
- Sweeping
- Jump on trampoline



## Vestibular

- Swing
- Slides



For more information or concerns about your child's sensory processing skills, please consult your child's occupational therapist or contact your pediatrician. You may also refer to www.aota.org for additional information.

#### References

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