



What is Sensory Processing?

Sensory processing is a term that refers to the way that the nervous system receives messages from the senses in our body and turns them into appropriate motor and behavioral responses. Whether you are biting into a hamburger, riding a bicycle, or reading a book, your successful completion of the activity requires processing sensation or "sensory integration." Difficulties occur when the signals don't get organized and the appropriate responses are not able to be made. (Definition from the Sensory Processing Disorder Foundation, 2012).

A child with difficulties with sensory processing may find it difficult to make sense of information received through their senses creating challenges in everyday activities, including fear with certain types of playground equipment, stuffing their mouths with food, aggression, slow to learn to potty train and constantly bumping into people or objects and falling easily.

Some Red Flags to help Identify if your child may have difficulties with sensory processing...

- Does your child avoid certain activities or settings, including bright lights, loud noises, touching or eating different textures (with an emotional upset or difficulties that seem inconsolable)?
- Are they a picky eater in regards to trying new food textures, different colors of food, or strong routines when it comes to eating?
- Does your child appear to be fearful of heights, playground equipment or being picked up quickly?
- Does your child seem very clumsy and uncoordinated in compared with many of their peers?
- Does your child avoid physical activities?
- Does your child seem to be able to only talk in a loud voice (after 2 1/2 years of age)?
- Does your child seem to be more aggressive than peers?
- Does your child not seem to feel pain when they fall down or are sick?
- Does your child seek excessive movement (spinning, swimming, etc.)

**If you have any concerns about your child please bring your concerns to your health care provider. An occupational therapist can evaluate your child if you and your health care provider feel they may be having difficulties with sensory processing.

