

# Sensory Profile

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

## Early Years

- Please print out this document in colour.
- **Red** statements indicate a hypersensitive, or over-sensitive, sensory profile in that area. This is when the body misinterprets sensory information as something unpleasant and will try and avoid such input wherever possible.
- **Blue** statements indicate a hyposensitive, or under-sensitive, sensory profile in that area. This is when the body is not processing sensory information effectively and therefore is constantly seeking more sensory input.
- A child can be hypersensitive in one area and hyposensitive in another. Their sensory needs may also fluctuate so it is important to complete sensory profiles regularly.

<b>Name of child:</b>	
<b>Date of completion:</b>	
<b>Name of person completing this profile:</b>	

# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Tactile – Touch **Over-sensitive / Avoiding**

This includes multiple types of touch sensation from the body including light touch.

Observation	often	sometimes	never	Strategies
Withdraws from a cuddle.				<b>Supporting the Child - Space and Touch</b> Allow the child to sit away from others (give space). Avoid light touch – use pressure when touching the child and always approach from the front. If touch is necessary, give the child prior warning.
Extremely ticklish / does not like unexpected touch.				
Does not like close proximity to others or brushing against people e.g. avoids lining up.				
Has difficulties with washing hair and hair cutting. Dislikes brushing hair / teeth and face washing.				<b>Supporting the Child - Clothing</b> Remove labels from the child's clothing. Wear socks inside out. Wash new clothes to soften them. Allow the child to wear comfortable versions of uniform e.g. jogging suit bottoms, black trainers. Massage feet before putting on socks and shoes.
Finds nappy changing distressing.				
Finds some clothes uncomfortable – may take off clothes.				
Dislikes seams, labels, fabric textures.				<b>Supporting the Child - Personal Care</b> Try different types of toothbrushes to see which work well for the child e.g. finger toothbrush. Try different toothpastes e.g. flavourless (contact school nursing team). Try different types of hairbrushes to see which work well for the child e.g. tangle teezer. Use a mirror to help the child to anticipate tooth / hair brushing.
Avoids messy play activities e.g. sand, clay, water.				
Does not like to get dirty and washes every bit of dirt from hands.				
Senses wet marks/ areas on clothes.				<b>Supporting the Child – Activities</b> Consider tactile element to activity and where possible modify, e.g. when painting or using playdough, allow use of tools and / or wearing gloves and allow the child to wash their hands if requested. Encourage barefoot play, gradually introducing contact with different surfaces e.g. textured bath mats, carpet tiles. Encourage messy play activities using hands e.g. begin with firm dry textures working up to wet/ sticky textures.
Eats a limited range of food and / or may avoid certain food textures – especially mixed textures.				
Appears to over react when hurt in playground.				
May walk on tip toes on certain surfaces. Walks on tip-toes when barefoot.				

# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Tactile – Touch Under-sensitive / Seeking

This includes multiple types of touch sensation from the body including light touch.

Observation	often	sometimes	never	Strategies
Craves rough and tumble play.				<b>Adapting the Environment</b> Messy play – sand, water, finger paint, shaving foam, jelly, slime, mud box. Exploratory play with different textures – lentils, rice, seeds, beans, pasta, cotton wool, sandpaper. Provision of tactile toys and objects e.g. pinecones, spiky balls, vibrating toys. <b>Supporting the Child - Pressure and Touch</b> Provide opportunities for the child to experience pressure e.g. massage roller, hug, wrapped in blanket. Suitably weighted blanket or cushion. Tight clothing e.g. vest. Include activities which involve pressure through the hands i.e. stiff dough play, baking with dough, magic sand, painting with hands and feet. <b>Supporting the Child - Activities</b> Finger songs and games. Encourage use of vibrating toothbrush. Encourage barefoot play, foot massage, foot spa. Barefoot activities e.g. bubble wrap, sand, gradually introduce contact with different surfaces e.g. bumpy bath mats, tray of small smooth pebbles.
Likes to be wrapped up tight / tight hugs.				
Needs to be wrapped up tight to sleep.				
Applies force through toys when playing.				
Has an increased need to fiddle and fidget.				
Has difficulty dressing / undressing. Does not notice when clothes are twisted or falling down.				
Does not show distress when hurt.				
Is a messy eater – does not notice or show concern about food around mouth.				
Chews non food items.				

# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Visual - **Over-sensitive / Avoiding**

We need to have filters to help us to visually focus, sometimes these do not work as they should, causing the child to see everything, or not see most important objects.

**Check that the child has had an eye test.**

Observation	often	sometimes	never	Strategies
Is distracted by multiple types of visual stimuli (will flit from one object to another).				<b>Adjusting the Environment</b> Have a low lighting area to help the child feel more comfortable.  Reduce the amount of clutter in the room e.g. no dangling objects, keep displays on noticeboards, reduced use of pattern, no wavy borders.  Fitting a blackout blind to bedroom window may help to improve sleep patterns.  Be aware of external visual distractions i.e. trees, roads, etc. fit a blind to the window to reduce distractions.  Use matt laminating pouches to reduce glare/reflection from light.  <b>Supporting the Child</b> Reduce amount of visual information / material presented at one time.  Warn the child of any changes that you will make to the environment.  Offer sunglasses or sunhat to reduce sunlight outside.  Accept that the child may choose not to give eye contact – that's OK.
Becomes distressed by very small changes in the environment.				
Squints or covers eyes in bright light e.g. sunshine, tube lights.				
Prefers to be in dark / dimly lit areas.				
Is distressed by fluorescent lightings, especially if they flicker.				
Cautious when moving from one floor surface to another e.g. lino to carpet or grass to concrete.				
Avoids eye gaze.				

# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Visual - Under-sensitive / Seeking

We need to have filters to help us to visually focus, sometimes these do not work as they should causing the child to see everything or not see the most important objects.

**Check that the child has had an eye test.**

Observation	often	sometimes	never	Strategies
Extended eye gaze - stares at objects, people or lights.				<b>Adapting the Environment</b> Include visually stimulating toys: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spinning or light-up toys</li> <li>• colour paddles or translucent blocks</li> <li>• light box play</li> <li>• torches or mirrors</li> <li>• bubble wands / machines.</li> <li>• sensory bottles with glitter, gems etc.</li> </ul> <b>Supporting the Child</b> Introduce interactive games that provide opportunities for eye movement e.g. <i>Row Row, Row your Boat</i> . Accept that the child may want to look out of the window or at light sources.
Focuses on a tiny part of an object rather than the bigger picture e.g. tiny threads or small patterns on the carpet.				
Is attracted to lights and is fascinated by shiny objects and bright colours.				
Holds objects close to his / her eye in peripheral / central vision. May spin or flick objects in front of eyes.				
Likes toys / items that spin.				
Spends a lot of time engaging with reflective surfaces e.g. mirrors, windows, shiny toys.				
Likes to watch fast moving images on screens. Quickly swipes to change the image.				

# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Auditory - **Over-sensitive / Avoiding**

What you hear and how you process what you hear e.g. difficulties filtering auditory input.

**Check that the child has had a hearing test.**

Observation	often	sometimes	never	Strategies
Covers their ears with their hands to protect from sounds.				<b>Adjusting the Environment</b> Review the environment – consider the noise made by the TV, radio, interactive whiteboard, people, outside traffic, heaters. Avoid music playing in the background. Zone the classroom / outdoor area into loud and quiet places. <b>Supporting the Child</b> Provide access to a quiet area. Consider ways to block sounds e.g. ear defenders, hood, use of musical toy (consistent noise). Allow self-soothing through humming / singing etc. Use a visual prompt to warn before entering a noisy place and provide a supportive strategy e.g. ear defenders. Provide preferred sounds / music CDs. Warn if a loud noise is likely e.g. fire alarm. Think of strategies to reduce distress e.g. be by the fire door to exit immediately.
Repeats the same words / vocalisations / hums as a way to soothe themselves when noises are upsetting them.				
Prefers quiet areas.				
Avoids or becomes distressed by loud sound e.g. school dining room, bathrooms with hand dryers, fire engines, fire alarm.				
Easily startled or shows distress by everyday sounds e.g. vacuum cleaner, child screaming, balloon popping.				
Frequently asks people to be quiet e.g. stop making noise, talking, singing. Places hand over people's mouths when they sing / talk.				
Notices or is interested in sounds not usually noticed by other people e.g. buzzing light, distant siren.				

# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Auditory - Under-sensitive / Seeking

What you hear and how you process what you hear e.g. difficulties filtering auditory input. A child may seek loud or specific noises.

**Check that the child has had a hearing test.**

Observation	often	sometimes	never	Strategies
Holds toys to ear and has volume on high or may favour low or high pitched sounds.				<b>Adjusting the Environment</b> Provide noisy toys / games / music at key times during the day. Provide stimulating music or preferred sounds. <b>Supporting the Child</b> Provide access to noise making resources e.g. outdoor music area, instruments, music with headphones, singing. Use name alongside a light touch before talking to the child. Provide favoured crunchy foods at snack time. Give warnings about sudden changes in noise levels.
Does not notice / respond when an adult or peer says their name or talks to them.				
Talks to themselves while doing a task to gain auditory feedback.				
Speaks loudly or struggles to alter voice tone.				
Loves loud music or TV.				
Likes to cause / hear certain sounds over and over again e.g. tapping, banging.				
Loves musical instruments or specific sounds e.g. running water, vacuum cleaner.				
Shows preference for noisy foods e.g. crunchy foods.				

# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Olfactory – Smell & Taste - **Over-sensitive / Avoiding**

The sense of smell. 90% of taste is dependent upon the sense of smell. NB: Rule out possible allergies.

Observation	often	sometimes	never	Strategies
Can be anxious and easily retch or be physically sick when smelling certain aromas, including food.				<b>Adjusting the Environment</b>  Limit exposure to smell, help the child to be aware of strategies to assist them with avoiding smells that are unpleasant e.g. leaving the area.  Make adjustments to the lunchtime routine e.g. provide the child with foods they are known to like, sit near an open window, eat in a room away from the dining room smells.  <b>Supporting the Child</b>  Teach the child calming strategies to help them deal with the overwhelming reactions to smells.  If the child has aversions to certain smells, it may be helpful for them to carry around a pleasant smell (in a container with a hole in the top) to use when bombarded with smells they cannot handle.  Use unscented soaps and avoid wearing perfume.  Make a positive link “mmmmm this jelly smells sweet”.  Involve the child in food preparation or messy play with foodstuffs.
Is distressed by certain smells e.g. petrol, mown grass etc.				
Gags in response to certain foods / aromas e.g. adult's perfume, cabbage.				
Gags with certain food textures or utensils in mouth.				
Child will avoid certain areas e.g. kitchen, dining room.				
Child notices smells that that others are not aware of.				
Prefers bland, predictable foods which may limit the range of foods they eat.				



# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Olfactory – Smell & Taste - Under-sensitive / Seeking

The sense of smell. 90% of taste is dependent upon the sense of smell. NB: Rule out possible allergies.

Unaware of reasonable hygiene issues e.g. smells own faeces, may play with faeces.				<b>Supporting the Child</b>  While changing his / her nappy allow the child to hold a ball of strong smelling play-dough, fragrance or washable toy.  Provide preferred foods including those with strong flavours.  Dip chewy toys in strong flavours.  Cut food into small pieces and encourage the child to eat one piece at a time.  Play guess the smell games starting with strong smells and graduating to subtler aromas.  Provide favoured smells e.g. preferred shampoo on dolls hair or a scent on cotton wool in a container with a hole in the top.  Encourage mark making using fragrant pens / crayons.  <b>Remove items that are hazardous to smell – try to provide safe alternatives.</b>
Craves food with strong smells / spices.				
Sniffs strong or usual smells e.g. whiteboard pens, perfume on a person, hair.				
Smells toys before playing with them or food before tasting it.				
Puts objects up his / her nose.				
Licks or eats non-food items e.g. dough, glue, sand, paint.				
Overfills mouth.				

# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Vestibular - **Over-sensitive / Avoiding**

The sense that detects motion, gravitational pull, space estimation, speed and direction of movement.

Observation	often	sometimes	never	Strategies
Unenthusiastic about movement.				<b>Adapting the Environment</b> Low balancing equipment, chalk marks on floor, mats as stepping stones.  <b>Supporting the Child</b> Gradually introduce games and songs to build tolerance to movement, rocking and spinning.  Activities which encourage the child to cross their arms or legs over to the opposite side of the body e.g. placing motivating toys to one side, mark making on large paper, clapping games, ribbon sticks.  Allow additional time and space for the child to explore movement.  Allow the child to sit in the middle seat when in the back of the car so they are able to focus their vision forward.  Try to purchase a car seat with a foot support under the child's feet, so they feel more stable when travelling.
Anxious when not in control of own movements - being picked up, swinging, feet off the ground, being upside-down.				
Dislikes playing on playground equipment e.g. swings / slides.				
Afraid of heights.				
Is travel sick.				
Hesitant to walk down the stairs (going up is ok). Does not like using escalators and lifts.				

# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Vestibular - Under-sensitive / Seeking

The sense that detects motion, gravitational pull, space estimation, speed and direction of movement.

Observation	often	sometimes	never	Strategies
Climbs at any opportunity.				<b>Adapting the Environment</b> Provide climbing equipment, obstacle courses, swings.  <b>Supporting the Child</b> Allow child to sit on a wobble cushion or peanut ball. Engage child in interactive play e.g. action rhymes, lycra play. Allow time spinning on a roundabout, swing, office chair or rocking toy. Let the child be pulled along on wheeled toys. Encourage control by slowing down the singing of rocking and spinning songs. Establish movement to music to develop more controlled motor skills. Ensure that movement breaks are available as well as settled / calm activities (try to achieve a balance).
Likes being upside down.				
Constantly on the move. Enjoys fast / speedy activities but not always in a controlled manner.				
Seeks rocking motion, runs back and forth or spins round and round without seeming to get dizzy.				
Loves swings and roundabouts (to excess).				

# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Proprioception - **Slow Response to Proprioception**

Proprioception is what enables our limbs to move into the right **position**, at the right **speed** with the right **amount of force** required for the activity. A child may present with jerky or clumsy movements. The child may walk on their toes to achieve sensory feedback so that they understand where their feet are positioned.

Observation	often	sometimes	never	Strategies
Uses too much force - may break things accidentally.				<b>Supporting the Child</b> Massage – using pressure touch on arms, legs, palms of hands and feet. Tactile activities which help the child to map where their limbs are e.g. walking on surfaces with different textures, messy play. Playing with toys that require the child to use the correct amount of pressure e.g. buttons, flaps, squirty water toys, dough, clay. Obstacle courses to practise different movements e.g. crawling, stepping up, balancing. Balancing on a wobble cushion or peanut ball. Provide support for sitting at carpet time, assembly or at the table e.g. somewhere to lean, a supporting adult, a chair with back and arms.
May use too little pressure or have 'weak' movements / grips.				
Leans on walls, furniture or other children / adults to seek feedback in order to understand where their body is in space.				
Taps / feels the edges of walls, desks. Walks round edges of hall or playground.				
Not aware of where their limbs are and how much pressure to use e.g. weak grasp, overly strong grasp leading to spilling or dropping objects.				

# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Proprioception - Seeking Out Proprioception

Proprioception is what enables our limbs to move into the right **position**, at the right **speed** with the right **amount of force** required for the activity. A child may present with jerky or clumsy movements. The child may walk on their toes to achieve sensory feedback so that they understand where their feet are positioned.

Observation	often	sometimes	never	Strategies
Likes pressure e.g. seeks pressure by crawling under heavy objects or prefers clothes to be tight.				<b>Supporting the Child</b> Jumping on a trampette. Opportunities to bounce e.g. space hopper, peanut ball. Rolling e.g. down a grassy slope, wrapped up in a blanket. Pushing and pulling e.g. wheelbarrow, brushing, shovelling. Carrying objects with some weight e.g. boxes, bucket of water, watering can. Playing with toys that require the child to use the correct amount of pressure e.g. buttons, flaps, squirty water toys, dough, clay. Obstacle courses to practise different movements e.g. crawling, stepping up, balancing. Provide support for sitting at carpet time, assembly or at the table e.g. somewhere to lean, a supporting adult, a chair with back and arms, wobble cushion / stool.
Takes risks during play which might compromise personal safety e.g. climbing high into trees, climbing on and jumping from high furniture.				
Appears to enjoy falling and will seek opportunities to fall without regard for personal safety.				
Seeks movement - swings on chair, wriggles on seat, tapping, banging objects, not able to sit still. Often choose to skip, run or bounce.				
Is unaware of their own strength and does not know how much force to use. May unintentionally hurt others or break toys.				
Not aware of where their limbs are and how much pressure to use e.g. overly strong grasp leading to spilling or dropping objects.				

# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Interoception - **Over-sensitive / Avoiding**

Interoception is the awareness of feelings within the body including temperature, pain, need for the toilet, hunger and thirst.

**Rule out medical and dental causes.**

Observation	often	sometimes	never	Strategies
Gets too hot or cold regardless of temperature.				<b>Adapting the Environment</b> Availability of cooling or warming strategies e.g. hand-held fans, gloves, cool / warm drinks, ear muffs, water spray outside. Provide a quiet calm area, with soft music. Remove or lessen unpleasant stimulus, this can be noise, smells, sights etc. Ensure hot water taps are set at a safe / comfortable temperature. <b>Supporting the Child</b> Overt teaching 'you wear a jumper when...' or a Social Story. Provide food and drinks at preferred temperatures. Provide play and everyday experiences where adults name and describe cold, warm and hot e.g. ice balloons, warm dough, hot oven. Pressure activities can help for both under and over-responsive pain reception. Be very sensitive around mealtimes - grade foodstuffs e.g. pureed, soft solids. Busy the hands; prevent action such as skin picking by busying the hands with fidgets. Replace the stimulation with another, socially acceptable stimulation.
Has extreme responses to changes in temperature e.g. takes all clothes off on a warm day.				
Rejects food or drink if it's not at the preferred temperature.				
Over-reacts to a minor injury.				
Hates having hair brushed and / or teeth brushed (feels painful).				
Hates rough and tumble play (feels pain easily).				
Uses toilet more often than others due to not liking the feeling of a full bladder.				
Eats frequently and in quantity to avoid hunger pangs.				

# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Interoception - Under-sensitive / Seeking

Interoception is the awareness of feelings within the body including temperature, pain, need for the toilet, hunger and thirst.

Observation	often	sometimes	never	Strategies
Oblivious of cold / heat.				<b>Adapting the Environment</b> Ensure that their sleeping or playing area is not near hot radiators or draughty windows. Ensure hot water taps are set at a safe temperature. <b>Supporting the Child</b> There is an element of risk in this condition, so overt teaching is essential, using prompts i.e. this plate is hot. Provide visual prompts to highlight the right time to wear a jumper / coat. Overt teaching 'you take your jumper off when you're hot' or a Social Story. Pressure activities can help for both under and over-responsive pain reception. Monitor levels of arousal; self-harm can be a response to low environment stimulus (boredom / frustration) or an overload in stimulus, to calm the system down. Engage the child in active movement. Place a barrier between the harmful act and body part i.e. a cushion on the table (head-banging), a cuff bandage to prevent biting the wrist. Provide an alternative to the harmful behaviour i.e. allow them to bite a chewy toy. Remind the child to eat or drink regularly e.g. small snacks as well as mealtimes. Prompt nappy changes or toilet visits.
Unaware when to remove a jacket or cardigan or when to add clothes.				
Unaware when an object is extremely hot or extremely cold.				
Unconscious of when food is too hot.				
Craves input through self-harm e.g. head-banging, self-biting.				
Scratches excessively.				
Appears impervious to pain.				
Is unaware that they are hurt (may have an injury but be unaware of it).				
Takes longer to toilet train due to not feeling a full bladder / bowel.				
Not aware of hunger or thirst so forgets to eat.				

# Sensory Profile



## 0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

### Things to note:

This resource sheet is part of the Sensory Profile Toolkit.

- How to Complete a Sensory Profile Help Sheet
- [Early Years Sensory Profile](#)
- Primary Sensory Profile
- Secondary Sensory Profile

### Reference / Evidence base – informed by:

Olga Bogdashina- Sensory perceptual issues in autism and Asperger syndrome 2016

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/sensory-differences/sensory-differences/all-audiences>