

## Sensory Processing Issues: Symptoms of Modulation Difficulties

This handout describes common behaviours that are seen in children (or adults) who have difficulties with sensory modulation. If you want to learn more about sensory processing disorder please visit our website [GriffinOT.com](http://GriffinOT.com).

Responses that could indicate **slower processing (under-responsivity)** of sensory inputs may include:

- Often doesn't notice or care whether food is spicy or bland (taste)
- Be unable to distinguish between different smells (smell)
- Seem oblivious to details of objects and the surrounding environment (including signs) (vision)
- Not notice if others walk into a room (vision)
- Does not respond when his or her name is called (auditory)
- May not hear sounds in the environment (auditory)
- Doesn't notice if hands or face are messy or dirty (touch)
- Doesn't cry when seriously hurt and isn't bothered by minor injuries (touch)
- Bumps into things (vestibular)
- Falls over objects (vestibular)
- Using too much force, and may break things accidentally (proprioception)
- Described as having 'weak muscles' and may use too little pressure (proprioception)
- Leaning or slumping on walls, furniture or others (proprioception)

Responses that could indicate seeking (craving) of sensory inputs include:

- Adds salt & spice to their food (taste)
- Smells people, animals and objects (smell)
- Watching visually stimulating scenes (e.g. aquarium, spinning objects) (vision)
- Chooses objects that are bright colours including clothing (vision)
- Enjoys noisy environments such as sports arena, shopping centres, malls and the cinema (auditory)
- Touching people to the point of irritating them (touch)
- Love messy play (touch)
- Rocks in their chair on the floor or while standing (vestibular)
- Loves extreme fast moving input e.g. swings/slides/rollercoaster (vestibular)
- Rarely get dizzy (vestibular)
- Hanging off things (proprioception)
- Pushing (proprioception)



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Responses that could indicate sensitivity (over-responsivity) to sensory inputs include:

- Only eats familiar foods (taste)
- Prefer bland foods (taste)
- Dislikes fragrances from perfume or bath products (smell)
- Dislikes bright lights or sunshine (blinks squints closes eyes) (vision)
- Prefers to work in low lighting (vision)
- Likes wearing hats or caps or sunglasses (vision)
- Startle easily to unexpected sounds (auditory)
- Easily distracted by background noises such as a lawn mower outside, an air conditioner, a refrigerator or buzz from fluorescent lights (auditory)
- Dislikes having messy hands (touch)
- Difficulty with toe and fingernail cutting / haircuts (touch)
- Fussy with food textures (touch)
- Irritated with certain clothing textures, labels and seams and socks avoids new clothes (touch)
- Avoids playing on swings and slides (either now or when younger) (vestibular)
- Seems afraid of riding in elevators or on escalators (vestibular)
- Becomes travel sick or dizzy easily (vestibular)

### References

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