

Neuro-Sensory Check List

Please check the areas where your child shows differences and indicate whether the difference is still present or was only present in the past:

Signs of Tactile Dysfunction:

1. Hypersensitivity to Touch (Tactile Defensiveness)

- becomes fearful, anxious or aggressive with light or unexpected touch
- as an infant, did/does not like to be held or cuddled; may arch back, cry, and pull away
- distressed when diaper is being, or needs to be, changed
- appears fearful of, or avoids standing in close proximity to other people or peers (especially in lines)
- becomes frightened when touched from behind or by someone/something they cannot see (such as when under a blanket)
- complains about having hair brushed; may be very picky about using a particular brush
- bothered by rough bed sheets (i.e., if old and "bumpy")
- avoids group situations for fear of the unexpected touch
- resists friendly or affectionate touch from anyone besides parents or siblings (and sometimes them too!)
- dislikes kisses, will "wipe off" place where kissed
- prefers hugs
- a raindrop, water from the shower, or wind blowing on the skin may feel like torture and produce adverse and avoidance reactions
- may overreact to minor cuts, scrapes, and or bug bites
- avoids touching certain textures of material (blankets, rugs, stuffed animals)
- refuses to wear new or stiff clothes, clothes with rough textures, turtlenecks, jeans, hats, or belts, etc.

___ avoids using hands for play

___ avoids/dislikes/aversive to "messy play", i.e., sand, mud, water, glue, glitter, playdoh, slime, shaving cream/funny foam etc.

___ will be distressed by dirty hands and want to wipe or wash them frequently

___ excessively ticklish

___ distressed by seams in socks and may refuse to wear them

___ distressed by clothes rubbing on skin; may want to wear shorts and short sleeves year round, toddlers may prefer to be naked and pull diapers and clothes off constantly

___ or, may want to wear long sleeve shirts and long pants year round to avoid having skin exposed

___ distressed about having face washed

___ distressed about having hair, toenails, or fingernails cut

___ resists brushing teeth and is extremely fearful of the dentist

___ is a picky eater, only eating certain tastes and textures; mixed textures tend to be avoided as well as hot or cold foods; resists trying new foods

___ may refuse to walk barefoot on grass or sand

___ may walk on toes only

2. Hyposensitivity to Touch (Under-Responsive):

___ may crave touch, needs to touch everything and everyone

___ is not aware of being touched/bumped unless done with extreme force or intensity

___ is not bothered by injuries, like cuts and bruises, and shows no distress with shots (may even say they love getting shots!)

___ may not be aware that hands or face are dirty or feel his/her nose running

___ may be self-abusive; pinching, biting, or banging his own head

___ mouths objects excessively

___ frequently hurts other children or pets while playing

___ repeatedly touches surfaces or objects that are soothing (i.e., blanket)

___ seeks out surfaces and textures that provide strong tactile feedback

___ thoroughly enjoys and seeks out messy play

___ craves vibrating or strong sensory input

___ has a preference and craving for excessively spicy, sweet, sour, or salty foods

3. Poor Tactile Perception and Discrimination:

___ has difficulty with fine motor tasks such as buttoning, zipping, and fastening clothes

___ may not be able to identify which part of their body was touched if they were not looking

___ may be afraid of the dark

___ may be a messy dresser; looks disheveled, does not notice pants are twisted, shirt is half untucked, shoes are untied, one pant leg is up and one is down, etc.

___ has difficulty using scissors, crayons, or silverware

___ continues to mouth objects to explore them even after age two

___ has difficulty figuring out physical characteristics of objects; shape, size, texture, temperature, weight, etc.

___ may not be able to identify objects by feel, uses vision to help; such as, reaching into backpack or desk to retrieve an item

Vestibular Sense: input from the inner ear about equilibrium, gravitational changes, movement experiences, and position in space.

Signs of Vestibular Dysfunction:

1. Hypersensitivity To Movement (Over-Responsive):

___ avoids/dislikes playground equipment; i.e., swings, ladders, slides, or merry-go-rounds

___ prefers sedentary tasks, moves slowly and cautiously, avoids taking risks, and may appear "wimpy"

___ avoids/dislikes elevators and escalators; may prefer sitting while they are on them or, actually get motion sickness from them

___ may physically cling to an adult they trust

___ may appear terrified of falling even when there is no real risk of it

___ afraid of heights, even the height of a curb or step

___ fearful of feet leaving the ground

___ fearful of going up or down stairs or walking on uneven surfaces

___ afraid of being tipped upside down, sideways or backwards; will strongly resist getting hair washed over the sink

___ startles if someone else moves them; i.e., pushing his/her chair closer to the table

___ as an infant, may never have liked baby swings or jumpers

___ may be fearful of, and have difficulty riding a bike, jumping, hopping, or balancing on one foot (especially if eyes are closed)

___ may have disliked being placed on stomach as an infant

___ loses balance easily and may appear clumsy

___ fearful of activities which require good balance

___ avoids rapid or rotating movements

2. Hyposensitivity to Movement (Under-Responsive):

- in constant motion, can't seem to sit still
- craves fast, spinning, and/or intense movement experiences
- loves being tossed in the air
- could spin for hours and never appear to be dizzy
- loves the fast, intense, and/or scary rides at amusement parks
- always jumping on furniture, trampolines, spinning in a swivel chair, or getting into upside down positions
- loves to swing as high as possible and for long periods of time
- is a "thrill-seeker"; dangerous at times
- always running, jumping, hopping etc. instead of walking
- rocks body, shakes leg, or head while sitting
- likes sudden or quick movements, such as, going over a big bump in the car or on a bike

3. Poor Muscle Tone and/or Coordination:

- has a limp, "floppy" body
- frequently slumps, lies down, and/or leans head on hand or arm while working at his/her desk
- difficulty simultaneously lifting head, arms, and legs off the floor while lying on stomach ("superman" position)
- often sits in a "W sit" position on the floor to stabilize body
- fatigues easily!
- compensates for "looseness" by grasping objects tightly
- difficulty turning doorknobs, handles, opening and closing items
- difficulty catching him/her self if falling

___ difficulty getting dressed and doing fasteners, zippers, and buttons

___ may have never crawled as an baby

___ has poor body awareness; bumps into things, knocks things over, trips, and/or appears clumsy

___ poor gross motor skills; jumping, catching a ball, jumping jacks, climbing a ladder etc.

___ poor fine motor skills; difficulty using "tools", such as pencils, silverware, combs, scissors etc.

___ may appear ambidextrous, frequently switching hands for coloring, cutting, writing etc.; does not have an established hand preference/dominance by 4 or 5 years old

___ has difficulty licking an ice cream cone

___ seems to be unsure about how to move body during movement, for example, stepping over something

___ difficulty learning exercise or dance steps

Proprioceptive Sense: input from the muscles and joints about body position, weight, pressure, stretch, movement, and changes in position in space.

Signs of Proprioceptive Dysfunction:

1. Sensory Seeking Behaviors:

___ seeks out jumping, bumping, and crashing activities

___ stomps feet when walking

___ kicks his/her feet on floor or chair while sitting at desk/table

___ bites or sucks on fingers and/or frequently cracks his/her knuckles

___ loves to be tightly wrapped in many or weighted blankets, especially at bedtime

___ prefers clothes (and belts, hoods, shoelaces) to be as tight as possible

___ loves/seeks out "squishing" activities

- enjoys bear hugs
- excessive banging on/with toys and objects
- loves "roughhousing" and tackling/wrestling games
- frequently falls on floor intentionally
- would jump on a trampoline for hours on end
- grinds his/her teeth throughout the day
- loves pushing/pulling/dragging objects
- loves jumping off furniture or from high places
- frequently hits, bumps or pushes other children
- chews on pens, straws, shirt sleeves etc.

2. Difficulty with "Grading of Movement":

- misjudges how much to flex and extend muscles during tasks/activities (i.e., putting arms into sleeves or climbing)
- difficulty regulating pressure when writing/drawing; may be too light to see or so hard the tip of writing utensil breaks
- written work is messy and he/she often rips the paper when erasing
- always seems to be breaking objects and toys
- misjudges the weight of an object, such as a glass of juice, picking it up with too much force sending it flying or spilling, or with too little force and complaining about objects being too heavy
- may not understand the idea of "heavy" or "light"; would not be able to hold two objects and tell you which weighs more
- seems to do everything with too much force; i.e., walking, slamming doors, pressing things too hard, slamming objects down

___ plays with animals with too much force, often hurting them

Signs of Auditory Dysfunction (no diagnosed hearing problem):

1. Hypersensitivity to Sounds (Auditory Defensiveness):

___ distracted by sounds not normally noticed by others; i.e., humming of lights or refrigerators, fans, heaters, or clocks ticking

___ fearful of the sound of a flushing toilet (especially in public bathrooms), vacuum, hairdryer, squeaky shoes, or a dog barking

___ started with or distracted by loud or unexpected sounds

___ bothered/distracted by background environmental sounds; i.e., lawn mowing or outside construction

___ frequently asks people to be quiet; i.e., stop making noise, talking, or singing

___ runs away, cries, and/or covers ears with loud or unexpected sounds

___ may refuse to go to movie theaters, parades, skating rinks, musical concerts etc.

___ may decide whether they like certain people by the sound of their voice

2. Hyposensitivity to Sounds (Under-Registers):

___ often does not respond to verbal cues or to name being called

___ appears to "make noise for noise's sake"

___ loves excessively loud music or TV

___ seems to have difficulty understanding or remembering what was said

___ appears oblivious to certain sounds

___ appears confused about where a sound is coming from

___ talks self through a task, often out loud

___ had little or no vocalizing or babbling as an infant

___ needs directions repeated often, or will say, "What?" frequently

Signs of Oral Input Dysfunction:

1. Hypersensitivity to Oral Input (Oral Defensiveness):

___ picky eater, often with extreme food preferences; i.e., limited repertoire of foods, picky about brands, resistive to trying new foods or restaurants, and may not eat at other people's houses)

___ may only eat "soft" or pureed foods past 24 months of age

___ may gag with textured foods

___ has difficulty with sucking, chewing, and swallowing; may choke or have a fear of choking

___ resists/refuses/extremely fearful of going to the dentist or having dental work done

___ may only eat hot or cold foods

___ refuses to lick envelopes, stamps, or stickers because of their taste

___ dislikes or complains about toothpaste and mouthwash

___ avoids seasoned, spicy, sweet, sour or salty foods; prefers bland foods

2. Hyposensitivity To Oral Input (Under-Registers)

___ may lick, taste, or chew on inedible objects

___ prefers foods with intense flavor; i.e., excessively spicy, sweet, sour, or salty

___ excessive drooling past the teething stage

___ frequently chews on hair, shirt, or fingers

___ constantly putting objects in mouth past the toddler years

___ acts as if all foods taste the same

__ can never get enough condiments or seasonings on his/her food

__ loves vibrating toothbrushes and even trips to the dentist

Signs of Olfactory Dysfunction (Smells):

1. Hypersensitivity to Smells (Over-Responsive):

__ reacts negatively to, or dislikes smells which do not usually bother, or get noticed, by other people

__ tells other people (or talks about) how bad or funny they smell

__ refuses to eat certain foods because of their smell

__ offended and/or nauseated by bathroom odors or personal hygiene smells

__ bothered/irritated by smell of perfume or cologne

__ bothered by household or cooking smells

__ may refuse to play at someone's house because of the way it smells

__ decides whether he/she likes someone or some place by the way it smells

2. Hyposensitivity to Smells (Under-Responsive):

__ has difficulty discriminating unpleasant odors

__ may drink or eat things that are poisonous because they do not notice the noxious smell

__ unable to identify smells from scratch 'n sniff stickers

__ does not notice odors that others usually complain about

__ fails to notice or ignores unpleasant odors

__ makes excessive use of smelling when introduced to objects, people, or places

__ uses smell to interact with objects

Signs of Visual Input Dysfunction (No Diagnosed Visual Deficit):

1. Hypersensitivity to Visual Input (Over-Responsiveness)

___ sensitive to bright lights; will squint, cover eyes, cry and/or get headaches from the light

___ has difficulty keeping eyes focused on task/activity he/she is working on for an appropriate amount of time

___ easily distracted by other visual stimuli in the room; i.e., movement, decorations, toys, windows, doorways etc.

___ has difficulty in bright colorful rooms or a dimly lit room

___ rubs his/her eyes, has watery eyes or gets headaches after reading or watching TV

___ avoids eye contact

___ enjoys playing in the dark

2. Hyposensitivity to Visual Input (Under-Responsive or Difficulty with Tracking, Discrimination, or Perception):

___ has difficulty telling the difference between similar printed letters or figures; i.e., p & q, b & d, + and x, or square and rectangle

___ has a hard time seeing the "big picture"; i.e., focuses on the details or patterns within the picture

___ has difficulty locating items among other items; i.e., papers on a desk, clothes in a drawer, items on a grocery shelf, or toys in a bin/toy box

___ often loses place when copying from a book or the chalkboard

___ difficulty controlling eye movement to track and follow moving objects

___ has difficulty telling the difference between different colors, shapes, and sizes

___ often loses his/her place while reading or doing math problems

___ makes reversals in words or letters when copying, or reads words backwards; i.e., "was" for "saw" and "no" for "on" after first grade

- complains about "seeing double"
 - difficulty finding differences in pictures, words, symbols, or objects
 - difficulty with consistent spacing and size of letters during writing and/or lining up numbers in math problems
 - difficulty with jigsaw puzzles, copying shapes, and/or cutting/tracing along a line
 - tends to write at a slant (up or down hill) on a page
 - confuses left and right
 - fatigues easily with schoolwork
 - difficulty judging spatial relationships in the environment; i.e., bumps into objects/people or missteps on curbs and stairs
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Auditory-Language Processing Dysfunction:

- unable to locate the source of a sound
- difficulty identifying people's voices
- difficulty discriminating between sounds/words; i.e., "dare" and "dear"
- difficulty filtering out other sounds while trying to pay attention to one person talking
- bothered by loud, sudden, metallic, or high-pitched sounds
- difficulty attending to, understanding, and remembering what is said or read; often asks for directions to be repeated and may only be able to understand or follow two sequential directions at a time
- looks at others to/for reassurance before answering
- difficulty putting ideas into words (written or verbal)
- often talks out of turn or "off topic"
- if not understood, has difficulty re-phrasing; may get frustrated, angry, and give up

difficulty reading, especially out loud (may also be dyslexic)

difficulty articulating and speaking clearly

ability to speak often improves after intense movement

Social, Emotional, Play, and Self-Regulation Dysfunction:

Social:

difficulty getting along with peers

prefers playing by self with objects or toys rather than with people

does not interact reciprocally with peers or adults; hard to have a "meaningful" two-way conversation

self-abusive or abusive to others

others have a hard time interpreting child's cues, needs, or emotions

does not seek out connections with familiar people

Emotional:

difficulty accepting changes in routine (to the point of tantrums)

gets easily frustrated

often impulsive

functions best in small group or individually

variable and quickly changing moods; prone to outbursts and tantrums

prefers to play on the outside, away from groups, or just be an observer

avoids eye contact

difficulty appropriately making needs known

Play:

- difficulty with imitative play (over 10 months)
- wanders aimlessly without purposeful play or exploration (over 15 months)
- needs adult guidance to play, difficulty playing independently (over 18 months)
- participates in repetitive play for hours; i.e., lining up toys cars, blocks, watching one movie over and over etc.

Self-Regulation:

- excessive irritability, fussiness or colic as an infant
- can't calm or soothe self through pacifier, comfort object, or caregiver
- can't go from sleeping to awake without distress
- requires excessive help from caregiver to fall asleep; i.e., rubbing back or head, rocking, long walks, or car rides

Internal Regulation (The Interoceptive Sense):

- becoming too hot or too cold sooner than others in the same environments; may not appear to ever get cold/hot, may not be able to maintain body temperature effectively
- difficulty in extreme temperatures or going from one extreme to another (i.e., winter, summer, going from air conditioning to outside heat, a heated house to the cold outside)
- respiration that is too fast, too slow, or cannot switch from one to the other easily as the body demands an appropriate respiratory response
- heart rate that speeds up or slows down too fast or too slow based on the demands imposed on it
- respiration and heart rate that takes longer than what is expected to slow down during or after exertion or fear
- severe/several mood swings throughout the day (angry to happy in short periods of time, perhaps without visible cause)

___ unpredictable state of arousal or inability to control arousal level (hyper to lethargic, quickly, vacillating between the two; over stimulated to under stimulated, within hours or days, depending on activity and setting, etc.)

___ frequent constipation or diarrhea, or mixed during the same day or over a few days

___ difficulty with potty training; does not seem to know when he/she has to go (i.e., cannot feel the necessary sensation that bowel or bladder are full)

___ unable to regulate thirst; always thirsty, never thirsty, or oscillates back and forth

___ unable to regulate hunger; eats all the time, won't eat at all, unable to feel full/hungry

___ unable to regulate appetite; has little to no appetite and/or will be "starving" one minute then full two bites later, then back to hungry again (prone to eating disorders and/or failure to thrive)

Checklist from:

<http://www.sensory-processing-disorder.com/sensory-processing-disorder-checklist.html>