

Sensory Processing Disorder Checklist

- The purpose of this sensory processing disorder checklist is to help guide parents to become educated about certain signs of sensory processing dysfunction.
- This checklist is not to be used as a way to diagnose your child with sensory processing disorder. Rather, this can be used as a tool to help you speak with your doctor and an Occupational Therapist so you can clearly explain why you think your child may need help.
- You might go through this list, and think; it's not a big deal if your child has these certain characteristics/behaviors. For many, a child's behavior can change on a daily basis, and therefore not be a cause for concern.
- You need to be concerned, however, when particular behaviors interfere with a child's life and the kind of impact it is having on their level of functioning. A child might have a lot in one category, and none in the other, or some in all categories. If you see that you have checked off at least 3 or more items in a section, you should follow up with your doctor and an Occupational Therapist.
- Above all else, we want you to remember to trust that great parental instinct you have. We hope that this checklist provides a way to empower you to move forward in advocating for your child. Never forget who you're fighting for.
- Please check the behaviors that are observed most of the time

Threshold Key	
	Neither Hyper or Hypo
Hyper	Hypersensitivity
Hypo	Hyposensitivity

	Item		Auditory Processing (Sound)
	Hyper	1.	distracted by sounds not normally noticed by others; i.e., humming of lights or refrigerators, fans, heaters, or clocks ticking
	Hyper	2.	fearful of the sound of a flushing toilet (especially in public bathrooms), vacuum, hairdryer, squeaky shoes, or a dog barking
	Hyper	3.	started with or distracted by loud or unexpected sounds
	Hyper	4.	bothered/distracted by background environmental sounds; i.e., lawn mowing or outside construction
	Hyper	5.	frequently asks people to be quiet; i.e., stop making noise, talking, or singing
	Hyper	6.	runs away, cries, and/or covers ears with loud or unexpected sounds
	Hyper	7.	may refuse to go to movie theaters, parades, skating rinks, musical concerts etc.
	Hyper	8.	may decide whether they like certain people by the sound of their voice
	Hypo	9.	often does not respond to verbal cues or to name being called
	Hypo	10.	appears to "make noise for noise's sake"
	Hypo	11.	loves excessively loud music or TV
	Hypo	12.	seems to have difficulty understanding or remembering what was said
	Hypo	13.	appears oblivious to certain sounds
	Hypo	14.	appears confused about where a sound is coming from
	Hypo	15.	talks self through a task, often out loud
	Hypo	16.	had little or no vocalizing or babbling as an infant
	Hypo	17.	needs directions repeated often, or will say, "What?" frequently

	Item		Visual Processing (Sight)
	Hyper	18.	sensitive to bright lights; will squint, cover eyes, cry and/or get headaches from the light
	Hyper	19.	has difficulty keeping eyes focused on task/activity he/she is working on for an appropriate amount of time
	Hyper	20.	easily distracted by other visual stimuli in the room; i.e., movement, decorations, toys, windows, doorways etc
	Hyper	21.	has difficulty in bright colorful rooms or a dimly lit room
	Hyper	22.	rubs his/her eyes, has watery eyes or gets headaches after reading or watching TV
	Hyper	23.	avoids eye contact
	Hyper	24.	enjoys playing in the dark
	Hypo	25.	has difficulty telling the difference between similar printed letters or figures; i.e., p & q, b & d, + and x, or square and rectangle
	Hypo	26.	has a hard time seeing the "big picture"; i.e., focuses on the details or patterns within the picture
	Hypo	27.	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
	Hypo	28.	often loses place when copying from a book or the chalkboard
	Hypo	29.	difficulty controlling eye movement to track and follow moving objects
	Hypo	30.	has difficulty telling the difference between different colors, shapes, and sizes
	Hypo	31.	often loses his/her place while reading or doing math problems
	Hypo	32.	makes reversals in words or letters when copying, or reads words backwards; i.e., "was" for "saw" and "no" for "on" after first grade
	Hypo	33.	complains about "seeing double"
	Hypo	34.	difficulty finding differences in pictures, words, symbols, or objects
	Hypo	35.	difficulty with consistent spacing and size of letters during writing and/or lining up numbers in math problems
	Hypo	36.	difficulty with jigsaw puzzles, copying shapes, and/or cutting/tracing along a line
	Hypo	37.	tends to write at a slant (up or down hill) on a page
	Hypo	38.	confuses left and right

	Hypo	39.	fatigues easily with schoolwork
	Hypo	40.	difficulty judging spatial relationships in the environment; i.e., bumps into objects/people or missteps on curbs and stairs

	Item		Vestibular Processing (Movement)
	Hyper	41.	avoids/dislikes playground equipment; i.e., swings, ladders, slides, or merry-go-rounds
	Hyper	42.	prefers sedentary tasks, moves slowly and cautiously, avoids taking risks, and may appear "wimpy"
	Hyper	43.	avoids/dislikes elevators and escalators; may prefer sitting while they are on them or, actually get motion sickness from them
	Hyper	44.	may physically cling to an adult they trust
	Hyper	45.	may appear terrified of falling even when there is no real risk of it
	Hyper	46.	afraid of heights, even the height of a curb or step
	Hyper	47.	fearful of feet leaving the ground
	Hyper	48.	fearful of going up or down stairs or walking on uneven surfaces
	Hyper	49.	afraid of being tipped upside down, sideways or backwards; will strongly resist getting hair washed over the sink
	Hyper	50.	startles if someone else moves them; i.e., pushing his/her chair closer to the table
	Hyper	51.	as an infant, may never have liked baby swings or jumpers
	Hyper	52.	may be fearful of, and have difficulty riding a bike, jumping, hopping, or balancing on one foot (especially if eyes are closed)
	Hyper	53.	may have disliked being placed on stomach as an infant
	Hyper	54.	loses balance easily and may appear clumsy
	Hyper	55.	fearful of activities which require good balance
	Hyper	56.	avoids rapid or rotating movements
	Hypo	57.	in constant motion, can't seem to sit still
	Hypo	58.	craves fast, spinning, and/or intense movement experiences
	Hypo	59.	loves being tossed in the air
	Hypo	60.	could spin for hours and never appear to be dizzy
	Hypo	61.	loves the fast, intense, and/or scary rides at amusement parks
	Hypo	62.	always jumping on furniture, trampolines, spinning in a swivel chair, or getting into upside down positions
	Hypo	63.	loves to swing as high as possible and for long periods of time
	Hypo	64.	is a "thrill-seeker"; dangerous at times
	Hypo	65.	always running, jumping, hopping etc. instead of walking
	Hypo	66.	rocks body, shakes leg, or head while sitting
	Hypo	67.	likes sudden or quick movements, such as, going over a big bump in the car or on a bike

Item		Vestibular Processing: Poor Muscle Tone And/Or Coordination
	68.	has a limp, "floppy" body
	69.	frequently slumps, lies down, and/or leans head on hand or arm while working at his/her desk
	70.	difficulty simultaneously lifting head, arms, and legs off the floor while lying on stomach ("superman" position)
	71.	often sits in a "W sit" position on the floor to stabilize body
	72.	fatigues easily!
	73.	compensates for "looseness" by grasping objects tightly
	74.	difficulty turning doorknobs, handles, opening and closing items
	75.	difficulty catching him/her self if falling
	76.	difficulty getting dressed and doing fasteners, zippers, and buttons
	77.	may have never crawled as an baby
	78.	has poor body awareness; bumps into things, knocks things over, trips, and/or appears clumsy
	79.	poor gross motor skills; jumping, catching a ball, jumping jacks, climbing a ladder etc.
	80.	poor fine motor skills; difficulty using "tools", such as pencils, silverware, combs, scissors etc.
	81.	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
	82.	has difficulty licking an ice cream cone
	83.	seems to be unsure about how to move body during movement, for example, stepping over something
	84.	difficulty learning exercise or dance steps

Item		Proprioceptive Processing: Sensory Seeking Behavior
	85.	seeks out jumping, bumping, and crashing activities
	86.	stomps feet when walking
	87.	kicks his/her feet on floor or chair while sitting at desk/table
	88.	bites or sucks on fingers and/or frequently cracks his/her knuckles
	89.	loves to be tightly wrapped in many or weighted blankets, especially at bedtime
	90.	prefers clothes (and belts, hoods, shoelaces) to be as tight as possible
	91.	loves/seekes out "squishing" activities
	92.	enjoys bear hugs
	93.	excessive banging on/with toys and objects
	94.	loves "roughhousing" and tackling/wrestling games
	95.	frequently falls on floor intentionally
	96.	would jump on a trampoline for hours on end
	97.	grinds his/her teeth throughout the day
	98.	loves pushing/pulling/dragging objects
	99.	loves jumping off furniture or from high places
	100.	frequently hits, bumps or pushes other children
	101.	chews on pens, straws, shirt sleeves etc.

Item		Proprioceptive Processing: Difficulty With "Grading of Movement"
	102.	misjudges how much to flex and extend muscles during tasks/activities (i.e., putting arms into sleeves or climbing)
	103.	difficulty regulating pressure when writing/drawing; may be too light to see or so hard the tip of writing utensil breaks
	104.	written work is messy and he/she often rips the paper when erasing
	105.	always seems to be breaking objects and toys
	106.	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
	107.	may not understand the idea of "heavy" or "light"; would not be able to hold two objects and tell you which weighs more
	108.	seems to do everything with too much force; i.e., walking, slamming doors, pressing things too hard, slamming objects down
	109.	plays with animals with too much force, often hurting them

Item		Tactile Processing (Touch)
Hyper	110.	becomes fearful, anxious or aggressive with light or unexpected touch
Hyper	111.	as an infant, did/does not like to be held or cuddled; may arch back, cry, and pull away
Hyper	112.	distressed when diaper is being, or needs to be, changed
Hyper	113.	appears fearful of, or avoids standing in close proximity to other people or peers (especially in lines)
Hyper	114.	becomes frightened when touched from behind or by someone/something they can not see (such as under a blanket)
Hyper	115.	complains about having hair brushed; may be very picky about using a particular brush
Hyper	116.	bothered by rough bed sheets (i.e., if old and "bumpy")
Hyper	117.	avoids group situations for fear of the unexpected touch
Hyper	118.	resists friendly or affectionate touch from anyone besides parents or siblings (and sometimes them too!)
Hyper	119.	dislikes kisses, will "wipe off" place where kissed
Hyper	120.	prefers hugs
Hyper	121.	a raindrop, water from the shower, or wind blowing on the skin may feel like torture and produce adverse and avoidance reactions
Hyper	122.	may overreact to minor cuts, scrapes, and or bug bites
Hyper	123.	avoids touching certain textures of material (blankets, rugs, stuffed animals)
Hyper	124.	refuses to wear new or stiff clothes, clothes with rough textures, turtlenecks, jeans, hats, or belts, etc.
Hyper	125.	avoids using hands for play
Hyper	126.	avoids/dislikes/aversive to "messy play", i.e., sand, mud, water, glue, glitter, playdoh, slime, shaving cream/funny foam etc.
Hyper	127.	will be distressed by dirty hands and want to wipe or wash them frequently
Hyper	128.	excessively ticklish
Hyper	129.	distressed by seams in socks and may refuse to wear them
Hyper	130.	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
Hyper	131.	or, may want to wear long sleeve shirts and long pants year round to avoid having skin exposed
Hyper	132.	distressed about having face washed
Hyper	133.	distressed about having hair, toenails, or fingernails cut

	Hyper	134.	resists brushing teeth and is extremely fearful of the dentist
	Hyper	135.	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
	Hyper	136.	may refuse to walk barefoot on grass or sand
	Hyper	137.	may walk on toes only
	Hypo	138.	may crave touch, needs to touch everything and everyone
	Hypo	139.	is not aware of being touched/bumped unless done with extreme force or intensity
	Hypo	140.	is not bothered by injuries, like cuts and bruises, and shows no distress with shots (may even say they love getting shots!)
	Hypo	141.	may not be aware that hands or face are dirty or feel his/her nose running
	Hypo	142.	may be self-abusive; pinching, biting, or banging his own head
	Hypo	143.	mouths objects excessively
	Hypo	144.	frequently hurts other children or pets while playing
	Hypo	145.	repeatedly touches surfaces or objects that are soothing (i.e., blanket)
	Hypo	146.	seeks out surfaces and textures that provide strong tactile feedback
	Hypo	147.	thoroughly enjoys and seeks out messy play
	Hypo	148.	craves vibrating or strong sensory input
	Hypo	149.	has a preference and craving for excessively spicy, sweet, sour, or salty foods

Item		Poor TACTILE Perception and Discrimination	
		150.	has difficulty with fine motor tasks such as buttoning, zipping, and fastening clothes
		151.	may not be able to identify which part of their body was touched if they were not looking
		152.	may be afraid of the dark
		153.	may be a messy dresser; looks disheveled, does not notice pants are twisted, shirt is half un tucked, shoes are untied, one pant leg is up and one is down, etc.
		154.	has difficulty using scissors, crayons, or silverware
		155.	continues to mouth objects to explore them even after age two
		156.	has difficulty figuring out physical characteristics of objects; shape, size, texture, temperature, weight, etc.
		157.	may not be able to identify objects by feel, uses vision to help; such as, reaching into backpack or desk to retrieve an item

Item		Oral Sensory Processing (Taste)	
	Hyper	158.	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)
	Hyper	159.	may only eat "soft" or pureed foods past 24 months of age
	Hyper	160.	may gag with textured foods
	Hyper	161.	has difficulty with sucking, chewing, and swallowing; may choke or have a fear of choking
	Hyper	162.	resists/refuses/extremely fearful of going to the dentist or having dental work done
	Hyper	163.	may only eat hot or cold foods
	Hyper	164.	refuses to lick envelopes, stamps, or stickers because of their taste
	Hyper	165.	dislikes or complains about toothpaste and mouthwash
	Hyper	166.	avoids seasoned, spicy, sweet, sour or salty foods; prefers bland foods

Hypo	167.	may lick, taste, or chew on inedible objects
Hypo	168	prefers foods with intense flavor; i.e., excessively spicy, sweet, sour, or salty
Hypo	169.	excessive drooling past the teething stage
Hypo	170.	frequently chews on hair, shirt, or fingers
Hypo	171.	constantly putting objects in mouth past the toddler years
Hypo	172.	acts as if all foods taste the same
Hypo	173.	can never get enough condiments or seasonings on his/her food
Hypo	174.	loves vibrating toothbrushes and even trips to the dentist

Item		Olfactory Sensory Processing (Smell)
Hyper	175.	reacts negatively to, or dislikes smells which do not usually bother, or get noticed, by other people
Hyper	176.	tells other people (or talks about) how bad or funny they smell
Hyper	177.	refuses to eat certain foods because of their smell
Hyper	178.	offended and/or nauseated by bathroom odors or personal hygiene smells
Hyper	179.	bothered/irritated by smell of perfume or cologne
Hyper	180.	bothered by household or cooking smells
Hyper	181.	may refuse to play at someone's house because of the way it smells
Hyper	182.	decides whether he/she likes someone or some place by the way it smells
Hypo	183.	has difficulty discriminating unpleasant odors
Hypo	184.	may drink or eat things that are poisonous because they do not notice the noxious smell
Hypo	185.	unable to identify smells from scratch 'n sniff stickers
Hypo	186.	does not notice odors that others usually complain about
Hypo	187.	fails to notice or ignores unpleasant odors
Hypo	188.	makes excessive use of smelling when introduced to objects, people, or places
Hypo	189.	uses smell to interact with objects

Item		Social, Emotional, Play, and Self-Regulation
Social	190.	difficulty getting along with peers
Social	191.	prefers playing by self with objects or toys rather than with people
Social	192.	does not interact reciprocally with peers or adults; hard to have a "meaningful" two-way conversation
Social	193.	self-abusive or abusive to others
Social	194.	others have a hard time interpreting child's cues, needs, or emotions
Social	195.	does not seek out connections with familiar people
Emotional	196.	difficulty accepting changes in routine (to the point of tantrums)
Emotional	197.	gets easily frustrated
Emotional	198.	often impulsive
Emotional	199.	functions best in small group or individually
Emotional	200.	variable and quickly changing moods; prone to outbursts and tantrums
Emotional	201.	prefers to play on the outside, away from groups, or just be an observer
Emotional	202.	avoids eye contact
Emotional	203.	difficulty appropriately making needs known

	Play	204.	difficulty with imitative play (over 10 months)
	Play	205.	wanders aimlessly without purposeful play or exploration (over 15 months)
	Play	206.	needs adult guidance to play, difficulty playing independently (over 18 months)
	Play	207.	participates in repetitive play for hours; i.e., lining up toys cars, blocks, watching one movie over and over etc.
	Self-Reg	208.	excessive irritability, fussiness or colic as an infant
	Self-Reg	209.	can't calm or soothe self through pacifier, comfort object, or caregiver
	Self-Reg	210.	can't go from sleeping to awake without distress
	Self-Reg	211.	requires excessive help from caregiver to fall asleep; i.e., rubbing back or head, rocking, long walks, or car rides
	Int Reg	212.	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
	Int Reg	213.	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)
	Int Reg	214.	respiration that is too fast, too slow, or cannot switch from one to the other easily as the body demands an appropriate respiratory response
	Int Reg	215.	heart rate that speeds up or slows down too fast or too slow based on the demands imposed on it
	Int Reg	216.	respiration and heart rate that takes longer than what is expected to slow down during or after exertion or fear
	Int Reg	217.	severe/several mood swings throughout the day (angry to happy in short periods of time, perhaps without visible cause)
	Int Reg	218.	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.)
	Int Reg	219.	frequent constipation or diarrhea, or mixed during the same day or over a few days
	Int Reg	220.	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
	Int Reg	221.	unable to regulate thirst; always thirsty, never thirsty, or oscillates back and forth
	Int Reg	222.	unable to regulate hunger; eats all the time, won't eat at all, unable to feel full/hungry
	Int Reg	223.	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)