

BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH SENSORY INTEGRATION

Eating Checklist

TOUCH

Hyper-responsive

- prefers food of consistent texture and temperature
- dislikes 'surprise' textures in foods (e.g., a noodle in the soup)
- gags when the texture of food is changed or even perceived to be changed
- has a very limited diet because of sensitivity to food textures
- has difficulty tolerating utensils in the mouth; prefers to eat finger foods
- drinks frequently during eating to wash food out of the mouth
- uses only fingertips when eating, has difficulty tolerating touch inside the hand
- is a picky eater
- has difficulty tolerating temperature changes in food
- often eats one type of food at a time
- demonstrates food preferences that become more limited in times of anxiety
- can't tolerate any food on lips, cheeks or chin

Hypo-responsive

- seeks out food and non-food objects to explore texture
- presents a safety concern; decreased processing of touch can lead to choking as the child may not feel the food reaching the back of the throat
- does not feel food on face
- demonstrates poor awareness of pain and temperature in the mouth

PROPRIOCEPTION

Hypo-responsive

- prefers chewy or crunchy foods to increase sensory input (fruit chews or chips)
- does not chew foods well (safety issue: choking)
- fatigues easily, especially during meals with a lot of chewing
- has difficulty maintaining posture to eat

CHAPTER 4: IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS WITH SENSORY INTEGRATION

- has decreased force in bite (may not be able to bite into an apple or chew meat)
- props body up using a hand under the chin or leans the head on the arm/body to stabilize posture for eating

VESTIBULAR

Hyper-responsive

- has difficulty with sitting balance
- has difficulty maintaining attention to the task when the head position changes to accommodate the fork/spoon
- has difficulty stabilizing vision to guide eating

Hypo-responsive

- needs movement; frequently stands up then sits down while eating
- needs to swing feet during eating
- constantly shifts position in the chair
- fatigues easily

VISUAL

Hyper-responsive

- becomes overwhelmed by the colors and patterns of food, plate and tablecloth
- has difficulty guiding movement with the eyes as the eyes prefer to look at an unchanging object
- is distracted by visual input
- hangs head close to food to block out extra visual input

Hypo-responsive

- has difficulty finding food/cutlery against a busy background
- adds items to plate to increase visual interest
- moves items on plate around to increase visual interest

AUDITORY

Hyper-responsive

- gets distracted by the noise of the food, utensils, people talking
- dislikes the sound of other people chewing

BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH SENSORY INTEGRATION

- dislikes the sound of chewing from themselves
- has difficulty eating when someone else is eating or talking

Hypo-responsive

- seeks out more sound when chewing/drinking

SMELL/TASTE

Hyper-responsive

- has difficulty with some tastes/odors
- gags easily when confronted with certain smells/tastes
- tolerates a narrow range of foods
- is very hesitant to try new foods
- is a poor eater
- becomes upset with the smell of food as it is cooking
- has strong preferences for some foods and wants to have them at every meal
- has difficulty eating out or at school, as the smells of the food of other people may not be tolerated

Hypo-responsive

- exhibits pica (chewing and eating non-edible items)
- seems not to smell things; is not motivated to eat because there is no taste
- seeks out the food of others