

CHAPTER 4: IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS WITH SENSORY INTEGRATION

Play Checklist

TOUCH

Hyper-responsive

- prefers predictable touch, as the expectation helps harness attention and improve processing
- dislikes getting messy
- avoids arts and crafts, cooking, gardening
- does not use the whole hand; prefers to use fingertips
- reacts aggressively to touch by others
- mouths objects if the hands are overly sensitive to touch
- has a strong preference for certain textures in toys
- chooses predictable toys to prevent surprises
- prefers dry to wet/dirty play
- uses toys differently than intended; may be used for a sensory purpose, not a play purpose
- prefers solitary play to play in small groups

Hypo-responsive

- feels excessive need to touch objects and people
- has decreased awareness of pain and temperature
- seeks out play with a lot of tactile input

PROPRIOCEPTION

Hypo-responsive

- prefers gross motor toys to manipulative because of the full body motion
- seems to have weak muscles
- tires easily
- has a weak grasp
- is unable to grade movement
- seems accident prone
- seems to enjoy falling and crashing

BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH SENSORY INTEGRATION

- doesn't easily change body position in relation to the toy or the play
- drops pieces of the toy or uses excessive/not enough force when playing with the toy
- does not play with the toy appropriately; may use it for a sensory purpose
- chews on toys to increase attention and/or postural stability
- 'locks' joints in order to maintain position
- has poor endurance
- prefers sedentary activities

VESTIBULAR

Hyper-responsive

- becomes fearful when the feet leave the ground
- dislikes being upside down
- avoids playground activities
- avoids play activities which call for movement
- uses eyes to compensate for balance challenges

Hypo-responsive

- has an excessive need for movement
- has difficulty adjusting the body to prepare for changes in position
- creates self movement through rocking
- constantly shifts in chair
- takes risks in movement

VISUAL

Hyper-responsive

- is uncomfortable in bright light; prefers to be in the dark
- concentrates on detail and is unable to see the 'whole picture'
- gets lost easily
- hesitates going up/down stairs
- prefers smaller spaces
- prefers less visually stimulating activities

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Hypo-responsive

- has excessive interest in moving, spinning, patterned movements
- has difficulty putting puzzles together
- loses their place when reading
- has difficulty visually tracking or finding an object against a busy background
- gets lost easily
- has trouble matching and sorting

AUDITORY

Hyper-responsive

- is defensive about sound; covers ears
- startles easily with loud, unexpected sound
- constantly makes sound to block out other sounds (humming)
- stops playing in the presence of unfamiliar sounds
- is easily distracted by sounds
- has difficulty participating in social play

Hypo-responsive

- is fascinated by certain sounds and repeats them often
- seeks out new sounds/volumes

SMELL/TASTE

Hyper-responsive

- dislikes new toys that have a strong smell

Hypo-responsive

- smells or tastes toys prior to play