

# SENSORY

## Discussion points

- Are there any times or places when the sensory environment seems particularly difficult for them?
- Does your child like to use any sensory toys or fidget toys?



**Sensory Processing Differences**

What are Sensory Processing Differences? Sensory processing differences refer to how individuals experience and respond to sensory input. Neurodivergent learners may process sensory information in different ways.

There are eight senses to consider:

- Sight
- Hearing
- Taste
- Smell
- Touch
- Balance (Vestibular)
- Body Awareness (Proprioception)
- Internal Senses (Interoception)

People may be **hypersensitive** (sensory avoiding) or **hypo-sensitive** (sensory seeking) in one or more of these senses at different times. These differences can affect the way a person interacts with the world, their emotional regulation, and their engagement in learning.

Why Sensory Processing Differences Matter

- Sensory overload can lead to de-regulation, anxiety, or shutdowns.
- Learners may struggle to stay within their window of tolerance, the optimal state for learning and interaction.
- Certain sensory differences can contribute to emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA), distress behaviour, or even school exclusion.

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**Sensory checklist**

**Auditory (Hearing)**

- Children avoid noisy places (covers ears, shows discomfort)
- Struggles to follow instructions
- Able to hear very quiet sounds that others cannot

**Visual (Sight)**

- Likes to flick objects in front of eyes or look at lights
- Easily distracted by visual stimuli

**Olfactory (Smell)**

- Dislikes strong smells
- Smells things

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**SENSORY PROCESSING**

Some Top Tips from parents to help you support your child's sensory processing

**Mix it Up**

"To help your child with sensory processing, you can help them mix up their sensory input. You can help them mix up 'hot' and 'cold' and help regulate and prioritize."

**Create a Sensory Area**

"Create a sensory area, which could be anything from a bag in a mobile sensory room or a pop up tent, somewhere where your child can have their space to move about."

**Out & About**

"When you're out and about, you might come across sensory triggers in the environment or ask yourself whether there've got sensory processing differences to the ones we see, especially the bigger ones."

**Acceptance**

"Acceptance is important. If your child's sensory related behaviour is not really hurting anybody, then just let them get on with it. If it is, then it's important to let them know that you're there to help them self-regulate themselves."

**Consistency**

"Consistency is important. If you notice your child has a sensory related behaviour, then try to make sure that they're in a consistent environment and that they're not being exposed to too many different sensory differences and that they can seek support over time."

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Advice Sheet  
(Sensory Processing)

Advice Sheet  
(Sensory checklist)

Top Tips Sheet  
(Sensory Processing)

**Making Sense of the Senses**

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Webinar  
(Sensory Processing)