|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sensory Processing Issues |  |
| What is it? |

|  |
| --- |
| An [over- or under sensitivity to sensory input](https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/sensory-processing-issues/sensory-processing-issues-your-questions-answered) such as sights, sounds, flavours, smells and textures |
|  |

 |
| Things you may notice A child may shift inconsistently between over and under sensitivity | **Oversensitivity:**Has trouble focusing; can’t filter out distractionsDislikes being touchedNotices sounds and smells that others don’tHas meltdowns, flees or becomes upset in noisy, crowded placesFears for his safety even when there’s no real dangerHas difficulty with new routines, new places and other changeShifts and moves around because he can’t get comfortableIs very [sensitive to the way clothing feels](https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/sensory-processing-issues/15-ways-to-help-your-child-cope-with-tactile-sensitivity)**Undersensitivity:**Constantly needs to touch people or thingsHas trouble gauging others’ personal spaceSeem clumsy or uncoordinatedShows a high tolerance for painPlays roughly and takes physical risks |
| Possible emotional and social impact | Feeling anxious in or avoiding crowded and noisy places can make it hard to socialise.Peers may avoid or exclude an undersensitive child because he plays too roughly or doesn’t respect their [personal space](https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/common-challenges/picking-up-on-social-cues/at-a-glance-teaching-your-child-about-personal-space). |
| Sensory Processing Issues |  |
| Professionals who may be available to helpThese will vary depending on availability in your area | [Occupational therapists](https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/treatments-approaches/therapies/occupational-therapy-what-you-need-to-know): Help kids learn coping skills for challenging situationsProvide [sensory integration therapy](https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/treatments-approaches/therapies/sensory-integration-therapy-what-you-need-to-know) that helps kids respond to sensory input in an appropriate wayClinical child psychologists: Provide behavior therapy to teach kids skills to manage their actions and interactions. Provide [cognitive behavioral therapy](https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/treatments-approaches/therapies/faqs-about-cognitive-behavioral-therapy) to help with emotional issues related to their sensory processing issues. Diagnose ADHD and mental health issues that may co-occur with sensory processing issues. May also evaluate for learning issuesDevelopmental-behavioral pediatricians: Prescribe medication for anxiety to relieve panic responses |
| What schools may provideThese will vary dependant on need and stage of schooling | Accommodations and/or occupational therapy, under a 504 plan or an IEP. Child might be eligible for an IEP under the category of “other health impairment,” especially if he also has ADHD. Examples of accommodations might include:A seat away from distracting sources of noiseSensory breaksPhysical activity to help regulate emotions, behaviour and need for movementNoise-cancelling headphones or ear buds to reduce stimulation in busy places like assembliesA chair that is a good fit for him so he can put his feet flat on the floor and rest his elbows on the deskAn inflated cushion or pillow so he can both squirm and stay in his seat |
| Sensory Processing Issues |  |
| What you can do at home | [Track your child’s behaviour patterns](https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/understanding-childs-challenges/observing-taking-notes/observing-your-child-specifics-to-look-for) so you can anticipate tough situations for himPrepare your child for social gatherings or new situations so he knows what to expectKeep earplugs or ear buds handyFind outlets for your child’s energy such as exercise routines, sports or musicTeach your child about dangerous situations he may not be sensitive to, such as bitter cold and burning heatBuy divided plates if he’s bothered when different foods touchInstall and use dimmer switches or coloured bulbs to modify lightingShop with your child so he can pick out clothes that are comfortable for himLook for [tagless, seamless clothes](https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/sensory-processing-issues/6-clothing-solutions-for-kids-with-sensory-processing-issues) in super-soft fabrics |