

# Sensory Processing Disorders: Diagnosis & Treatment

## Understanding & helping children with sensory disorders.

### What Are Sensory Processing Disorders?

“It is a complex disorder of the brain. People with sensory processing disorder misinterpret everyday sensory information such as touch, sound, and movement. This can lead to behavioral problems, difficulties with coordination and many other issues.”

*-Lucy Jane Miller, Ph.D., OTR  
Director of The STAR Center*

### How Do I Recognize a Sensory Seeker?

A sensory seeker may be a child who is “on the go”, is a risk taker, has to touch and experience everything, makes noises, gets overly excited with movement, or jumps from activity to activity.

### How Do I Recognize a Sensory Avoider?

A sensory avoider may be a child who avoids crowds, covers his/her ears to filter out noises, is afraid of swings or heights, is a very picky eater, or one who prefers sedentary play.

### What Test Is Used for a Sensory Integration Evaluation?

The Sensory Integration and Praxis Test (SIPT) is used for children ranging in age from 4 years, 6 months to 8 years, 11 months.

### How Do I Recognize Coordination or Praxis Challenges?

This is a child who has difficulty learning new skills and tasks, such as riding a bike or tying shoes.



*Children who are labeled “hyperactive” or “overly sensitive” often have sensory modulation difficulties and can be helped with therapies and a few carefully selected toys at home.*

### What Tests Are Used for Identifying a Sensory Processing Disorder?

Children’s Care Rehabilitation Center applies sensory profiles, questionnaires, family discussion and observations, and professional observations of the child to determine if a child may have a sensory processing disorder. The Sensory Integration and Praxis Test (SIPT) is a specialized test used for children ranging in age from 4 years, 6 months to 8 years, 11 months.

### Who Can Perform Sensory Processing Evaluations, and Where Can I Go for Sensory-Based Occupational Therapy for My Child?

Children’s Care Rehabilitation Center has staff trained and certified in sensory -based testing and treatment. We have an expansive variety of sensory-based therapeutic equipment and an enriched environment called the “Sensory Room” to help your child with their individualized therapy program. Please contact us at (605)782-2400 for more information about sensory processing and the therapy we can provide at Children’s Care Rehabilitation Center for children with sensory-based disorders.



**CHILDREN’S CARE**  
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# Signs That Your Child May Have Sensory Processing Disorder

## Infants (approximately from birth to 2 years)

- Difficulty tolerating lying either on back or on stomach
- Slow to roll over, creep, sit, or stand
- Resists being held, becomes tense when held, or dislikes being cuddled
- Difficulty consoling self when upset
- Is a restless sleeper or may be colicky
- Dislikes baths
- Avoids putting items in mouth
- Exhibits sucking difficulties which makes bottle feeding challenging or slow
- Difficulty with self-feeding

## Preschool Child (3 to 5 years)

- Difficulty with potty training
- Difficulty learning to tie shoes, zip, or button clothes
- Because of poor eye-hand coordination and/or poor motor planning has difficulty coloring between lines, putting puzzles together, or learning to cut with scissors
- Struggles increase as the child's fine motor skills develop
- May be described as clumsy, uncoordinated, or always bumping into things or tripping
- Does not enjoy or appears to fear jumping, climbing, swinging
- Difficulty learning to ride bicycles, rollerskate/rollerblade, jump rope, or jump on trampolines
- Difficulty making transitions from one situation to another
- Dislikes getting hands dirty (i.e. in sand or finger paints)
- Dislikes walking barefoot, especially in grass or sand
- Dislikes having face washed or hair washed, combed, or cut
- Dislikes certain clothes such as turtlenecks, new jeans, tube socks, belts, hats, specific materials, etc.
- Difficulty inhibiting stimuli; therefore, overreacts to noises, touch – often light, certain odors, or lights *or* does not respond to sound, touch, smell, or light
- Delayed language development (fails to develop speech by 2 to 3 years)

## School Age Child (6 years and up)

- Finds it hard to make friends with children of own age
- Has trouble keeping up with peers in physical education
- Does not like to participate with other kids on playground equipment
- Play challenges may emerge (bike riding, skipping rope, rollerblading, jumping on trampolines, ball activities, organized sports, etc.)
- Tends to need much more practice than peers to learn new skills
- Becomes upset when tickled, hugged, or when in a crowd
- Difficulty transitioning between people, places, or activities
- Teacher may report that the child “goofs off” too much, cannot seem to “get his or her act together,” or is “too messy”
- May be sent to principal's office for touching, poking, or hitting other children
- Difficulty focusing attention
- Difficulty following instructions
- Difficulty learning to write
- Cannot keep letters between lines
- Rests head on hand or on desk while sitting at a desk or writing
- Grades may start to slip, self-esteem and motivation may also become issues
- Morning routines may be difficult to follow
- Insists on sleeping with heavy blanket (even in summer) or overdresses for the weather



*Sensory therapy seems like play to a child, but it helps to calm and focus their attention.*