

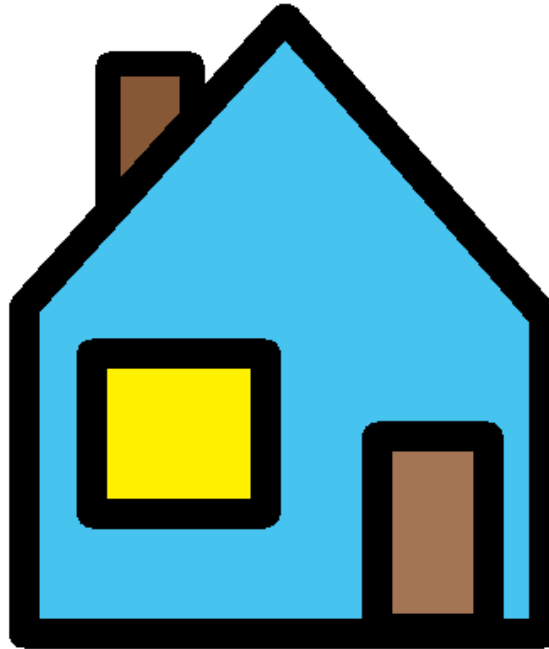
An Inclusive Sensory Environment at Home

Sensory Avoidant

A sensory avoidant child might be labelled as 'shy' or 'cautious'.

He or she will probably feel safest in their home environment where there are predictable and typically decreased levels of sensory input.

He or she will need help to tolerate greater levels of sensory input and be supported when sensory input is overwhelming.



Sensory Seeking

A sensory seeking child might be labelled as 'rowdy' or 'distracted'.

He or she will probably have trouble sitting still and will try to experience as much sensory stimulation as possible.

He or she will need help to tolerate lower levels of sensory input and be supported to stay calm in the face of sensory stimulation.



VISUAL

Sensory seeking:

Looks closely at objects and people
Enjoys watching changing colours/
lights
May like to watch moving/spinning
objects or the play of light/shadow on
and through objects

Sensory Avoidant:

May enjoy being in the dark
May be irritated by bright lights and
colours
May be irritated by changes in light
(e.g. sun through leaves on windy day)

Activities for exploring:

Face painting

Tracking activities

Obstacle course activities

Ball games and targets

Drawing/tracing

Puzzles

Sorting

Torches/lamps

Variety of book

Wearing glasses with different coloured lenses

Coloured pockets with glitter

Glitter bottles



TASTING

Sensory seeking:

Mouths non-food objects

Licks non-food objects

Craves specific tastes (often 'strong')

Flavours like sour/spicy)

Over-stuffs mouth when eating

Sensory Avoidant:

*Restricted diet—limits self to
specific food textures and bland
tastes*

Gags from food in mouth

Eats very small pieces at a time

Activities for exploring:

General eating experiences: offer choices, range of foods

Present food in variety of ways: cut, peeled, whole

Swipe lips with food

Blowing and sucking activities: blowing/sucking cotton balls with straws,
blowing paint through a straw, blowing bubbles, using straws for milk,
blowing feathers off nose/hand

Cooking: Make and eat food together—sandwich, smoothie, rice krispie
buns etc.



SMELL

Sensory seeking:

Seeks out strange smells—for example, by smelling toys and other resources

Brings objects to face to inhale

Smells other people

Sensory Avoidant:

Overly sensitive to smells in the room—may lead to nausea or gagging

Doesn't like going to snack and gets upset at lunch time

Activities for exploring:

Smelly dough

Smelly water

Looking for smelly objects in dough

Outdoor walks

Use of natural materials in classroom e.g. Mulch, pine cones, wood

Guess the smell: closed boxes with hole and different smelling objects inside

Smelling food/toothpaste/soap



HEARING

Sensory seeking:

Appears not to hear what you say
Makes strange noises or sounds
Becomes overly energised in loud settings

Sensory Avoidant:

Reacts negatively to loud sounds or certain pitches (e.g. hands over ears)
'Shuts down' in crowded spaces
Distracted even by small sounds

Activities for exploring:

Rhyme and song

Music activities: e.g. practicing loud and quiet, listening to the teacher make a sound with an instrument and copying/picking the right instrument; beating time in a song

Animal Noises: e.g. guessing the animal from the sound, matching animal sounds

Sound lotto boards

Chinese whispers: e.g. guess the animal from the sound

Headphones: to mute sounds or to tune sounds in environment out so to listen to one specific thing

Audiobooks

Linking actions to commands: e.g. Stop/go games such as traffic lights/sleeping bunnies



TOUCH

Sensory seeking:

Craves sensory material e.g. sand, water, foam, paint

Touches people and things excessively

Shows decreased awareness of pain and temperature

Might squeeze/touch others excessively

Sensory Avoidant:

Irritated by getting dirty in sand, paint, dough etc.

Overwhelmed by face and hair washing

Walks on toes to avoid textures on feet

Activities for exploring:

Messy paint: palms in paint, painting finger nails with paint, draw shapes with fingers

Shaving foam car wash: foam on tray, drive car through, rinse and dry

Sand dunes: spray water on sand to dampen, mould to dunes, cut out shapes

Feely shapes: cooked spaghetti and pasta to make pictures—spoons and sticks to manipulate if don't want to touch

Dough: roll into sausages, eggs, squeeze through fingers—different 'wetness' and elasticity

No mess messy play: blobs of coloured paint in zip lock bag to manipulate and mix together

Tactile road: use classroom resources to make a varied textured track for children to walk on barefoot

Nature walk and bracelet: sticky tape round wrist, go out into garden and stick things on to it (leaves, flowers etc.)

Texture tubs/feely bag



MOVEMENT

Sensory seeking:

Always 'on the go'
May twirl and spin themselves
Has trouble sitting and attending
Prefers outdoor play

Sensory Avoidant:

Spends a lot of time at sedentary activities (sitting at the table, lying down)
Avoids large physical play equipment
Movement is slower than peers

Activities for exploring:

Massage: e.g. Lotion into hands and feet

Walking on textures

Obstacle course activities

Monkey bars

Musical statues

Stop and go games

Jumping

Moving on different levels: crawling, climbing, balancing

Gym balls: balancing on stomach, taking weight on hands, sitting

Giant saucer: good for gentle and vigorous movements, spinning, different body positions

Scooter board: gentle and vigorous movements, balance, lying on stomach

Sausage rolls: roll up in a mat or heavy blanket with head sticking out— chop, put on sauce, unroll

Boat ride: row row row your boat



BODY AWARENESS

Sensory seeking:

Intentionally crash into people and things
Shows decreased safety awareness
Enjoys being in tight spaces
Enjoys tight hugs, lying on floor, pushing tummy against table
Might squeeze other children
Pushes too hard with crayons, paint brush
Destructive, rough play with toys and others

Sensory Avoidant:

Overreacts to getting bumped, pushed, or falling down
Avoids getting hugged
Light touch on page
Leaning instead of sitting straight
Tiptoe walk

Activities for exploring:

Deep pressure: pushing against wall, off chair, pushing own head or hands together

Rough and tumble: opportunities for tumbling and rolling on mat, crawling through tunnels, pulling self-up climbing frame

Pounding activities: hammer and dough, hammer and nail pictures, squashing dough with hands, pushing pegs into pegboards

Different sized objects to get in and through. (Can I fit?)

Carrying, pushing and pulling 'heavy' items e.g. Pushing chairs in, wiping table, brushing up sand, put away large toys

Gardening activities (raking, digging, planting)

Animal walks (e.g. crab, bear, snake, and bunny)

Dressing up