

What are sensory symptoms?

Every child with sensory challenges will have their own set of behaviours. These are usually a combinations of sensory avoidance and sensory seeking behaviours.

The following is a list of common symptoms. Your child may have just a few of these and not all of the symptoms.

Tactile symptoms

- May avoid letting others touch them and would rather touch others.
- They frequently fuss or resist hair washing or cutting. They may act like their life is being threatened when being bathed or having clothes changed.
- They are often irritated by certain types of clothes, clothing labels or new clothes. They may dislike being close to others and avoid crowds.
- They can be agitated by people accidentally bumping into them. They often do not like to get their hands or feet dirty.
- Some may bump or crash into things on purpose as a way of seeking sensation or seem under-responsive to certain sensations or pain.

Oral symptoms

Oral defensiveness is where there is an overly strong dislike or avoid certain textures or types of food.

- May be over or under sensitive to spicy or hot foods; avoid putting objects in their mouth; and/or intensely dislike tooth brushing or face washing.
- Your child may have had a variety of feeding problems since infancy.

Gravitational Insecurity

- An irrational fear of change in position or movement e.g. having their feet leave the ground, or having their head tipped backwards.

Postural Insecurity

- A fear and avoidance of certain movement activities due to poor postural mechanisms.

Visual symptoms

This may involve an over sensitivity to light and visual distractibility.

- Avoiding going outside in certain light and/or need to wear hats or sunglasses to block out light.
- May startle more easily and/or avert their eyes or seem to avoid eye contact.

Auditory symptoms

- Over sensitivity to certain sounds and may involve irritable or fearful responses to noises like vacuum cleaners, motors, fire alarms, etc.
- Sometimes individuals can be heard making excessive amounts of noise to block out sound.

Hypersensitivity to sound

- May show as placing fingers over ears as if to block out the sound.
- If there is a lot of background noise or if someone is trying to have a conversation with you they may constantly interrupt, make noises and be generally disruptive.
- They may also have difficulty paying attention when there are noises nearby. They are also easily distracted by sounds which go unnoticed by others e.g. the hum of the fridge.

Taste and smell

This may include unusual sensitivities taste and/or smell, perfumes or food.