

A Practitioners Guide to Sensory Processing

Children with sensory processing difficulties may struggle with processing and responding to sensory information in their environment, which can impact their behaviour, emotions, and ability to learn. As a teacher in the early years, it is important to understand how to support these children and create a positive learning environment for them.

Sensory processing difficulties refer to a condition



where an individual has trouble processing sensory information, which can lead to problems with motor skills, emotional regulation, attention, and behaviour. These difficulties can manifest in different ways, depending on the individual's sensory system. For example, some children may be overly sensitive to sensory stimuli, while others may seek out sensory stimulation.

Children with sensory processing difficulties may find it challenging to focus and learn in a traditional classroom environment. They may experience distractions from sensory stimuli, have difficulty following instructions, and struggle to engage in group activities. This can lead to feelings of frustration, anxiety, and low self-esteem.



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Strategies for supporting children with sensory processing difficulties:

- Create a sensory-friendly environment: Consider the sensory needs of your pupils when designing your classroom. For example, provide options for lighting, seating, and noise levels. Use calming colours and limit clutter.
- Use visual aids: Provide visual aids to support learning, such as pictures, charts, and timetables. This can help children with processing information and following instructions.
- Break tasks into smaller steps: Children with sensory processing differences may find it overwhelming to tackle large tasks. Break tasks into smaller steps and provide clear instructions.
- Offer sensory breaks: Allow children to take breaks when needed to regulate their sensory system. Sensory breaks can involve movement, deep pressure, or calming activities such as reading or drawing.
- Use positive reinforcement: Recognise and praise children for their efforts and achievements. This can boost their confidence and motivation to learn.

Children with sensory processing difficulties require support and understanding from their teachers to succeed in the classroom. By creating a sensory-friendly environment, providing visual aids, breaking tasks into smaller steps, offering sensory breaks, and using positive reinforcement, teachers can help these children thrive and reach their full potential.





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