

Sensory Processing

Sensory Processing Disorder

Sensory processing is when the nervous system processes the message it has received from the senses and the resulting motor or behavioural response. In sensory processing disorder (also known as sensory integration disorder/dysfunction), the sensory signals are not interpreted in the typical way. A person with SPD will find it difficult to process and respond to the information received from the senses.

There are three main subtypes:

Sensory Modulation Disorder

Difficulty regulating response to sensory stimuli.

This subtype is broken down further into: Sensory Over Responsivity, Sensory Under Responsivity and Sensory Craving.

Sensory Based Motor Disorder

Difficulty with balance and coordination + skilled motor tasks.

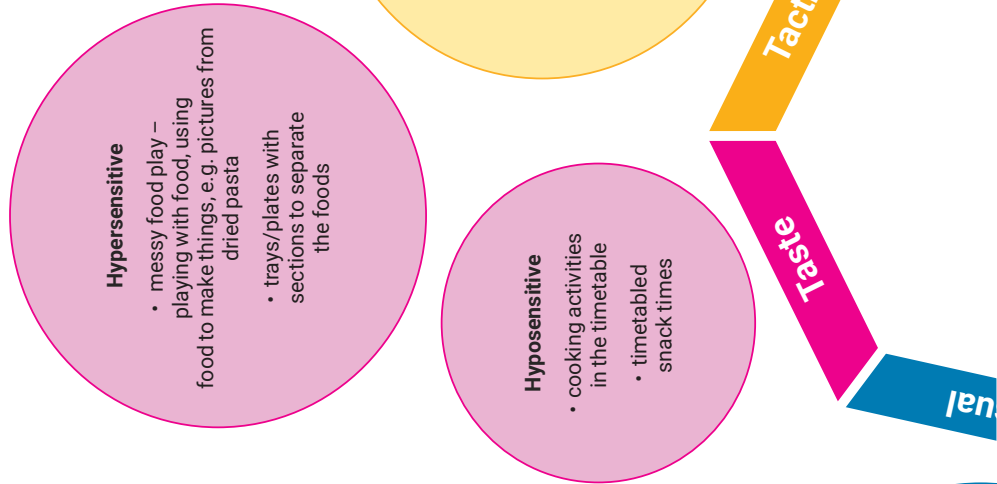
This subtype is broken down into: Dyspraxia and Postural Disorder

Sensory Discrimination Disorder

Difficulty in understanding sensory stimuli, i.e. difficulties in understanding what is seen, heard, tasted, felt and smell. This subtype is broken down further into each of the sensory systems.

Hyper
Receiving too much information

Hypo
Receiving too little information



Visual

tubes, lava lamps

- mirror balls, disco balls
- spinning tops and wheels
- pouring play, e.g. pouring sand, water, rice, confetti, glitter

Sound

Hyposensitive

- banging on pots/pans, wind chimes, rainmakers
- musical instruments
- cause-and-effect toys
- listening to music
- give time to respond to speech

Hypersensitive

- give warning about noises that are about to happen
- avoid sudden loud noises/shouting/use visual cues
- a quiet, calm space with dim lighting
- listen to preferred music
- soft toys/toys that make a gentle sound
- headphones/ear defenders

Proprioception

SPD can occur in each of the sensory systems: Visual, Auditory, Vestibular (Movement), Smell, Taste, Tactile, Proprioception (Body Sense).

These are some ideas you could try.

Hyposensitive

- pushing/pulling activities
- jumping
- weighted objects

Hypersensitive

- slowly introduce movement activities - allow time to process

Smell

Hyposensitive

- use a range of smells - some that are relaxing, some that are calming and some that are stimulating
- add scents to playdough
- create a 'smellory' - a range of different smells on cotton wool in small containers or herbs/plants, etc.
- sensory gardens with fragrant herbs and plants

Hypersensitive

- try to find out which smells are having a negative effect (consider hand creams, shower gels, aftershaves, perfumes, cleaning products, etc.)
- play with foods

Vestibular

- balance activities, e.g. space hoppers, balance board, therapy ball
- swinging