

A blue banner with white text and decorative yellow and green wavy lines. The text reads "Sensory Processing Concerns & Strategies".

# Sensory Processing

## Concerns & Strategies

### Sensory Strategies

#### **Tactile Sensitivity**

- Reacts emotionally or aggressively to touch
- Prefers long sleeved clothing
- Avoids messy activities: glue, clay, paint
- Scratches or picks at skin

#### **Taste/Smell**

- Avoids certain tastes or food smells
- Picky eater, especially regarding food textures
- Strong reactions to certain smells: perfume, cleaners, etc.

#### **Movement Sensitivity**

- Becomes distressed when feet leave the ground
- Avoids gross motor activities
- Dislikes when head is upside down (e.g. somersaults)

#### **Sensation seeking**

- Enjoys making strange noises
- Seeks out all kinds of movement (can't sit still, rocks in chair, fidgets)
- Becomes overly excitable during movement activity
- Touches people or objects

- Jumps from one activity to another

## **Auditory**

- Distracted or trouble functioning in noisy environment
- Holds hands over ears or appears startled by everyday noises
- Doesn't respond when name is called, but hearing is OK
- Tunes out during class discussions

## **Visual Sensitivity**

- Bothered by bright lights
- Covers eyes to protect from light
- Watches everyone as they move around the room
- Has difficulty finding objects in desk or drawer
- Difficulty tracking with reading or copying off the board/overhead

## **Endurance/Energy**

- Seems to have weak muscles
- Tires easily, especially when standing
- Has a weak grasp
- Poor endurance

## **Sensory Strategies**

### **Tactile Sensitivity**

- Allow student to choose where he/she is comfortable sitting
- Encourage student to communicate need for personal space
- Provide break from too much tactile input such as quiet space on beanbag
- Gradually expose student to messy/wet materials, but do not force it
- Allow student to wear long sleeves, even if it seems too hot to do so

## **Taste/Smell**

- Ask parents for a list of foods or smells that the student is sensitive to
- Discourage perfumes, strong cleaners, and other scents in the classroom
- Allow student with these sensitivities an alternative area to eat, if possible

## **Movement Sensitivity**

- Do not force student to do activities where feet leave the ground (e.g. swinging)
- Provide a footstool if student's feet do not touch the ground when seated
- Consult with PE Teacher, staff on playground regarding safety issues
- Check with parents regarding any medical issues that may contribute
- Break movements into steps and physically guide the student through the activity
- Incorporate easy movement breaks into class routine

## **Sensation Seeking**

- Use wiggle cushions on chairs to allow student to move in chair
- Use a weighted lap pad while child does seatwork-this helps to focus and calm
- Place student away from busy areas of classroom to limit distractions
- Provide fidgets (squeeze balls, curly laces, etc.) during circle time or discussions
- Provide frequent movement breaks
- Allow change of position when writing; standing, at table at back of room

## **Auditory**

- Provide earplugs or noise muffling headphones
- Allow student to move to a quiet area if noise sensitive
- Warn sound-sensitive students of fire drills before they happen
- Place student away from noise such as fans, overhead projectors, hallways

## **Visual Sensitivity**

- Place student with light sensitivity away from bright windows
- Provide a study carrel to limit distractions
- Help student organize desk items for easy visual access
- Provide paper copies of writing on overhead and board
- Provide class calming breaks with lights off, soft music

### **Endurance/Energy**

- Allow student to sit in circle with back support
- Movement breaks such as jumping jacks, walks, swinging
- Provide pencil grips and reduced amount of writing
- Do hand warm-up and strengthening exercises before fine motor activities
- Consult with parents and PE Teacher re: physical causes of fatigue
- Provide appropriately sized desk and chair