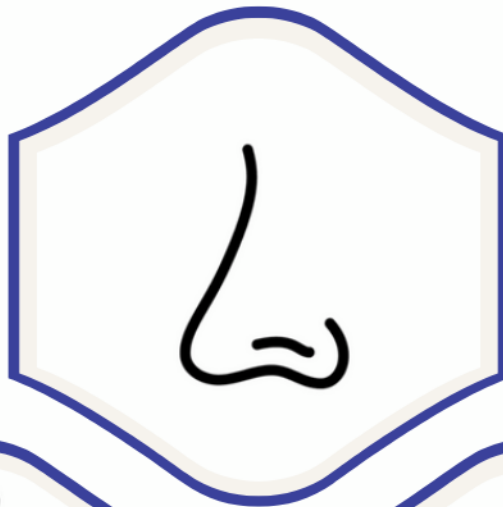




UNIVERSITY OF  
**LINCOLN**  
ACADEMY TRUST

# POSITIVE SENSORY PROFILING



# CONTENTS

- 1 THE 8 SENSES EXPLAINED**
- 2 THE SENSORY PROFILE**
- 3 CHILD/YOUNG PERSON'S VOICE**
- 4 SENSORY STRATEGIES**
- 5 POSITIVE SENSORY PROFILING**
- 6 GLOSSARY**

# SECTION 1

**THE 8 SENSES EXPLAINED**

## **SOUND**

*(Auditory Sensory System)*

Some children/young people find sounds painful and can have difficulty with two or more people talking at once. This over-sensitivity can make it difficult to screen out background noise. Other pupils may be under-sensitive to noise and find it difficult to process certain sounds.

## **SIGHT**

*(Visual Sensory System)*

Some pupils may be over-sensitive to particular colours, patterns or light. Others may be under-sensitive and therefore fail to see certain colours or transparent objects. Certain features (e.g. colours) may not be of interest to the pupil who therefore may not process this information. Some pupils may require visually defined spaces.

## **TASTE**

*(Gustatory Sensory System)*

Some pupils can be over-sensitive to the taste of certain foods and find some tastes very unpleasant. Others may be under-sensitive to taste and therefore enjoy eating highly flavoured food. Pupils may also experience difficulties with certain textures of food.

## **SMELL**

*(Olfactory Sensory System)*

Some pupils may be over sensitive to certain smells. Others may not have a strong sense of smell and might lick objects or smear substances so that they can smell things better or to block out other sensations.

## **TOUCH**

*(Tactile Sensory System)*

**Pupils who are over-sensitive may dislike the touch of others or the feeling of particular clothing on their skin. Certain textures can cause distress.**

**Other pupils might be under-sensitive and as a result may have a dangerously high tolerance for pain or discomfort.**

## **BALANCE**

*(Vestibular Sensory System)*

**This is our sense of movement which is detected with our head movements.**

**Some pupils might not keep balance easily and can have difficulties in certain environments, such as uneven or moving surfaces.**

## **PROPRIOCEPTION**

*(Movement & Coordination)*

**Many pupils have difficulty sensing where the body is in space and having a sense of where it starts and ends. This clearly presents problems when moving around and in doing activities which involve movement and coordination.**

## **INTEROCEPTION**

*(Internal Feelings)*

**Interoception is the ability to detect and attend to internal bodily sensations. It helps a pupil understand what is going on inside of the body like hunger, thirst, feeling hot or cold, fatigue, or a full bladder.**

**This sense is hugely linked with us recognising and responding to our emotions.**

# SECTION 2

## **THE SENSORY PROFILE**

# HOW TO COMPLETE THE PROFILE

HIGHLIGHT THE STATEMENTS THAT YOU HAVE OBSERVED REPEATEDLY OVER THE LAST MONTH TO A DEGREE THAT IMPACTS ON DAY TO DAY ROUTINE AND ACTIVITIES

ONLY COMPLETE THE SECTIONS RELEVANT TO THE INDIVIDUAL. DON'T FEEL AS THOUGH YOU NEED TO HIGHLIGHT SOMETHING ON EVERY PAGE

PRINT AND SEND HOME THE PARENT/CARER BOOKLET. ONCE COMPLETED, INCLUDE THIS INFORMATION ALONGSIDE THE CHILD'S PRESENTATION IN SCHOOL WHEN COMPLETING THE PROFILE

## START HERE

CYP NAME

DOB

SENSORY PROFILE COMPLETE BY

*Use a different highlighting colour for each review*

REVIEW DATE:

REVIEW DATE:

REVIEW DATE:

HIGHLIGHT  
COLOUR:

HIGHLIGHT  
COLOUR:

HIGHLIGHT  
COLOUR:

## **SOUND**

### **HYPER-SENSITIVITY**

**Dislikes noisy places**

**Easily distracted and bothered by background noises**

**Cries / covers ears with loud or unexpected sounds**

**Asks / tells others to be quiet**

**Makes their own sound to cover other noise.**

**Reacts to noise with a certain pitch/texture rather than volume.**

**Becomes excited by noise**

**Can't filter out noise and effects focus**

**Short attention span**

**Can hear sounds others are not aware of**

**Puts hands over ears**

**Difficultly listening in a group**



### **HYPO-SENSITIVITY**

**May not consistently respond to their name**

**Prefers TV and music to be loud**

**Often doesn't notice background noise**

**Makes own self-stimulatory sounds**

**May appear oblivious to some sounds**

**Has difficulty locating a sound**

**Uses a loud voice to increase alert level or drown other noise**



## **SIGHT**

### **HYPER-SENSITIVITY**

- Bothered by bright lights, sun**
- Dislikes visually busy places/environments**
- Avoidance of visual games/models**
- Avoids/Prefers certain colours**
- Avoids eye contact**
- Prefers dim lighting/shades**
- Rubs eyes a lot/bloodshot**
- May get headaches from reading**
- Blinks very frequently/squints**
- Moves hands/fingers/objects in front of their eyes constantly**
- Prefers/seekes dark areas**
- Can find it difficult to see objects on a busy picture**
- Struggles to focus**
- Finds sustained focus on TV/computer screen difficult**
- Finds coloured overlays/paper helpful when reading & writing**

### **HYPO-SENSITIVITY**

- Difficulty following a visual model/schedule**
- Enjoys visually busy tasks/games/action-packed TV shows**
- Too visually focused-doesn't monitor the periphery**
- Loves shiny spinning moving objects**
- Difficulty with hand-eye co-ordination tasks**
- Difficulty distinguishing between similar letters/shapes**
- Difficulty with visual tracking/may lose place frequently when reading/transferring information from the board**
- Focuses on details and misses the bigger picture/concept**
- Walks into people/objects as if they were not there**
- Struggles to judge distances so may bump into furniture**
- Difficulty matching and sorting objects**
- Enjoys watching repetitive movements – e.g. sprinkling of sand/water, spinning objects, lining up**

## **TASTE**

### **HYPER-SENSITIVITY**

**Talks about smell a lot/notices odours others don't**

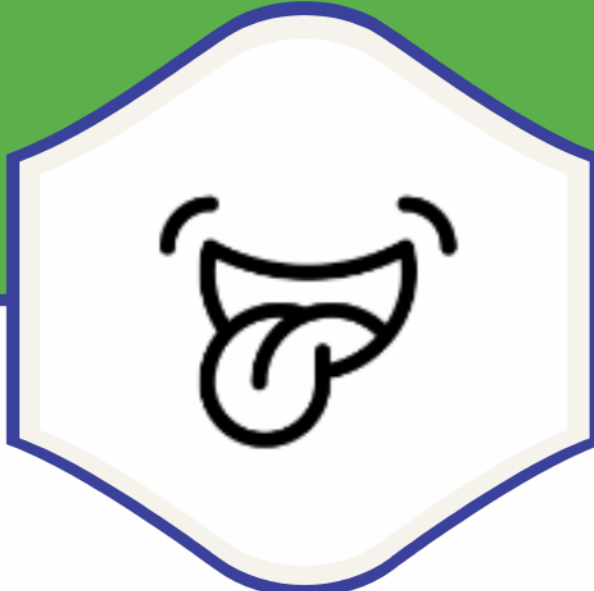
**Plugs nose/ avoids places with certain/strong smells**

**Dislikes new foods. May have limited food preferences. Gags easily**

**Unable to participate in mealtimes**

**Distracted by smell in the room and can't focus**

**Finds it difficult to access the dining hall**



### **HYPO-SENSITIVITY**

**Smells/licks/eats inedible objects**

**Likes strong smells**

**Uses smell to interact with objects**

**Prefers strongly flavoured foods/ craves intense flavours. Constantly seeking input through his/her mouth**

**Packs food into mouth before swallowing**

**Eats very quickly**

## **SMELL**

### **HYPER-SENSITIVITY**

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## **TOUCH**

### **HYPER-SENSITIVITY**

**Is agitated by seams in clothing, tags or waistbands**

**Avoids touch or physical contact**

**Avoids messy play**

**Limited food preferences**

**Sensitive to food textures**

**Avoids standing close to others/crowded situations (e.g. sit in a circle)**

**Finds it difficult to work in a defined/confined space with others**

**Startles easily when touched unexpectedly**

**Over reacts to minor injuries**

**Won't wear jumper/coat**

**Dislikes long/short sleeves**

**Dislikes holding writing or cutting equipment**



### **HYPO-SENSITIVITY**

**Always touching others-craving touch**

**May prefer to be without clothes/ barefoot**

**Doesn't seem to notice messy hands or face**

**Touches everything**

**May put too much food in mouth**

**Unaware of light touch**

**Doesn't seem to notice minor injuries/drools/doesn't wipe a runny nose**

**Unintentionally rough other children**

**Difficulty with fine motor skills, manipulating tools and objects**

**Examines everything by bringing it to their mouth**

**Shoes on the wrong feet often**

**Engages in self-stimulatory/self-injurious behaviour**

**Regularly bumps into things**

**Seeks out deep pressure activities**

## **VESTIBULAR**

### **HYPER-SENSITIVITY**

**Avoids activities that require both feet off the ground, fears being 'off balance' e.g. PE lessons**

**Unsettled (easily-nauseated) after movement experience**

**Holds head upright while leaning back or bending over**

**Poor negotiation over uneven ground**

**Hesitation on steps / equipment**

**May try to control or manipulate events to avoid stressful sensations**

**Often seeking physical support from adults**

**Dislikes sudden movement**

**Dislikes changes of body position**



### **HYPO-SENSITIVITY**

**W sitting on the floor**

**Difficulty sitting (especially 'still')**

**Constantly moving / loves spinning / being upside down**

**May have low muscle tone (muscles and joints seem too soft / floppy)**

**Slumps / leans in chair – poor balance**

**Rocks self or moves head back and forth whilst sitting**

**Becomes over-excited after a movement activity**

**Lacks hand dominance**

**Actions do not cross midline of body**

**Difficulty following a moving object**

**Trouble holding head up whilst sitting**

**Self-spins for sustained periods without getting dizzy**

**May rock the head from side to side to maintain attention**



## **PROPRIOCEPTION**

### **HYPER-SENSITIVITY**

**Moves slowly, appears lethargic & tires easily**

**Avoids activities that provides resistance**

**Prefers to be without shoes**

**Doesn't like tight fitting clothes**

**Dislikes physical play**

**Becomes anxious with unpredictable movement (e.g. PE) or frequent movement (e.g. from carpet to chair)**

**Finds some surfaces difficult to walk on**

### **HYPO-SENSITIVITY**

**Plays roughly other children**

**Clumsy/bumps into things**

**Kicks heels against the floor/chair**

**Seeks frequent movement breaks**

**Leans on objects/people for stability**

**Loves jumping/wrestling/crashing activities**

**Presses too hard or too light when colouring/ writing**

**Chews on clothes/ toys**

**Grinds teeth/ cracks knuckles**

**Looks at hands whilst writing or feet while riding a bike**

**Accidentally breaks objects frequently  
Seeks tight hugs and squishing activities/ positions**

### **NEITHER HYPER OR HYPO**

**Uses inappropriate force on an object (too much or too little)**

**Poor gait when walking**

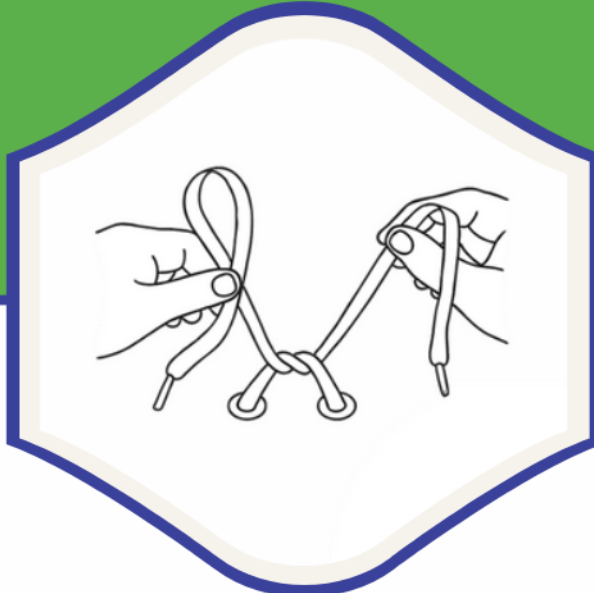
**Difficulty in imitating, planning and sequencing**

**Walks on toes / walks heavily**

**Difficulty with fine motor tasks**

**Self-abusive behaviours- pinching/ biting/ head banging**

## FINE MOTOR SKILLS



Grasps objects

Eats food with fingers

Still undecided on which hand to use

Holds crayon in fist grip

Scribbles spontaneously

Draw circles/lines with controls

Traces/ overwrites numbers/letters/shapes

Copies numbers/letters/shapes

Snips with scissors

Cuts in a continuous movement

Able to hold paper and cut, turning corners

Threads beads

Turns handles

Stacks blocks

Fits objects into the right holes

Can do buttons

Can do zips

Can do shoelaces

Pours water/sand from one container to another accurately

Holds pencil in tripod grip (thumb and fingers)

Uses knife to cut food

Turns pages independently in a book

## INTEROCEPTION



**Doesn't feel hungry**

**Does not recognise feeling full up**

**Is constantly drinking always seeming thirsty**

**Unaware of being thirsty**

**Unaware of feeling too hot/ too cold**

**Unaware of full bladder/ bowel**

**Can often seem lethargic/tires easily**

**Finds emotional recognition and regulation difficult**

# SECTION 3

**CHILD/YOUNG PERSON'S VOICE**

**IF A PUPIL CANNOT VERBALISE THEIR FEELINGS, ALLOW THEM TO DRAW PICTURES OR TAKE PICTURES OF THEM COMPLETING AN ACTIVITY WHICH IS APPLICABLE TO A SPECIFIC SECTION AND ATTACH IT TO THE SHEET.**

**CUT ALONG THE LINE BELOW & ASK THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON TO COMPLETE.**



**Name:**

**What/who/where makes me happy and calm?**

**What/who/where makes me worried or cross?**

**Things that help me learn**

**Thank you for helping with this, it is very important that you help us understand what we can do to make school a more comfortable and a happier place to be.**

# SECTION 4

## SENSORY STRATEGIES

# HOW TO USE THE STRATEGIES

**LOOK AT THE STATEMENTS  
HIGHLIGHTED ON THE SENSORY  
PROFILES AND IMPLEMENT  
RELEVANT SUGGESTED STRATEGIES  
TO MEET THESE NEEDS**

**STRATEGIES SHOULD BE ADAPTED  
TO SUIT THE ENVIRONMENT,  
EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE AND  
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES**

**USE SELECTED ACTIVITIES AND  
STRATEGIES IN CONJUNCTION  
WITH PERSONALISED  
VISUAL SUPPORTS IDENTIFIED TO  
REDUCE ANXIETY**

## SOUND



**Quieter space to eat lunch**

**Quiet environments - Use of own workstation, safe space with low(er) light**

**Access to ear defenders – ear plugs, sound cancelling headphones**

**Screens to deaden/reduce sound**

**Limiting the noise activity before it over-stimulates**

**Prepare or warn of specific noise**

**Minimise auditory distractions e.g. flooring**

**Provision of a ‘Dark’ Den**

**Use of music through headphones – discover calming and arousing music**

**Identify and label different sounds**

**One lead voice**

**Build up tolerance of distance from sound source - looking to get closer**

**Use of name first to gain attention**

**Wait until noise has passed before giving instructions**

**Visual cues**

**Written instructions alongside verbal**

**Allow processing time**

**Over learning and repetition**

**Use rhythm and beat to help memory e.g. own words to a familiar tune**

**Allow staggered transitions (before/after others)**

## SIGHT



Sunglasses for outdoor light

Visual tracking activities, use a cut out window to read through-aiding focus

Ensure NAS 'SPELL' environment

Eye breaks/turning off lights or dimming

No pressure for eye contact

Visually marking where to stand, where to walk

Resources in opaque and labelled containers

Build tolerance to visuals, gradually increase – present resources pre-learning to avoid visual overload

Read in small bursts - timed and set amounts

Chunking work into visual sections (not too much to look at)

Checklists/visual schedules

Visual discrimination activities e.g. b and d, practice hand eye coordination

Written sheet on desk to copy from instead of the board, avoid clutter around the whiteboard

Writing slope to reduce distance eyes travel from board to paper

Explore coloured paper for reading/writing  
Large print on sheets/books

Background colours (not white) for the whiteboard, different colours for different lines on the whiteboard

Sensory breaks with visual calmers

Seating arrangements- think light, access to input, visual stimulation from resources or other people

Quiet safe space – minimal visual stimulation

Sit at the front of the class

Minimise visual distractions – pop-up screens on desk

Night lights for the dark

Dark den and light up calmers

Respect colour preferences in clothing, objects and interior décor (patterns on clothing, walls and floors)

## TASTE



**Build up tolerance over time**

**Visually cues for foods**

**Rewarding tolerance of smell**

**Experimental play with food materials**

- Explore tastes – sweet, salty, sour, spicy, bitter
- Explore temperature – frozen, cold, warm (visual cues of what to do e.g. wait, blow etc. Cold food first)
- Explore texture – crunchy, creamy, chewy, lumpy

**Teach/ label eating process e.g. chew, swallow. Adult supervision**

**Exploring different oral actions – chewing, blowing, sucking**

- Chewing – e.g. chew toys, chewy bracelets, chewy foods
- Blowing – e.g. bubbles, whistles
- Sucking – e.g. through straws, sports bottles, different thicknesses of liquid

**Use of mirror to check face after eating**

**Experiment with tooth brushes**

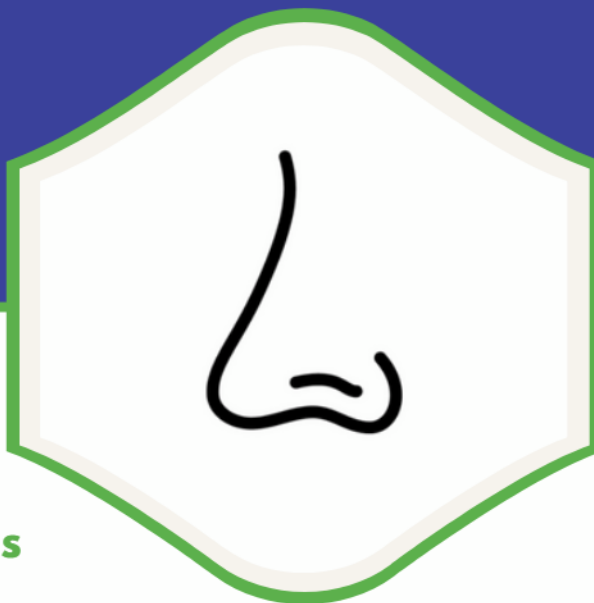
**Smell games - labelling smells, fragrant pens, crayons, books, stickers**

**Carry handkerchief/tissue with smell that they like**

**Teach socially appropriate skills/knowledge**

**Teach how to identify toys**

## SMELL



**Build up tolerance over time**

**Visually cues for foods**

**Rewarding tolerance of smell**

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**Carry handkerchief/tissue with smell that they like**

**Teach socially appropriate skills/knowledge**

**Teach how to identify toys**

# TOUCH



Access to daily  
Sensory Motor Circuits

No pressure to take part in  
activities - initially allowing to  
watch and gradually  
increasing expectations to participate

Build tolerance to proximity across  
environments – start with no pressure  
just watch, back or front of the line, middle with  
identified peers

Identify 1 environment first, build skills and then  
look to transfer to another environment

Peg at the end of the cloakroom

Consider seating to minimise being bumped into  
by others

Gradual exposure to a variety of tactile  
experiences - time limited and rewarded to  
motivate

Tolerate presence of less desirable textured foods  
- move to touch, lick,  
touch on lip, small bites-limit and motivate

Adult support to identify how much food to put in  
their mouth. Model and label process e.g. chew  
then swallow

Discuss with families about adapting uniform e.g.  
removing tags, easy uniform, seamless socks,  
compression vests etc

Identify messy hands and face through using a  
mirror to see they mess so that they can action  
cleaning up

Raise awareness of their dress/shoes - what to  
look for and how to alter

Look to replace self-stimulatory unsafe or  
inappropriate behaviours. Consider what the  
behaviour provides in order to replace

Use of deep pressure  
activities – to calm/soothe  
and regulate

Deep pressure to feet, massage  
or use of massage rollers

Therapy brushing – use of different textures  
(CYP led)

Resistance exercises (see  
proprioception/vestibular sections)

Consider the use of a squeeze vest (in  
discussion with family, sensory leads/SLT and  
following guidelines for use)

Incorporate messy play (finger  
painting/foam) and cooking into the  
timetable

Offer different sensations for the mouth  
(dependent on developmental level) - chews  
or vibrating chews

Identify their space with a visual marker  
Contrasting tactile experiences in learning  
e.g. sandpaper letters, shaving foam to draw  
letter

Provide/identify something to touch, times  
needed.

Use of hand fidgets, including vibrating toys  
(pens, balls stuffed toys etc)

Personalised sensory box

Identify times/environments  
when it is safe to remove shoes e.g. in the  
classroom or sensory area

Limit activities before they  
become over-stimulating

## VESTIBULAR



Access to daily Sensory Motor Circuits

Movement/ sensory breaks

Activate/ Go Noodle

Yoga / Balance - to stretch and relax muscles, develop core stability through balance work, wobble board. Lying on back (sleeping lions)

Activities moving head side to side; turning, rotating, spinning – skipping, rocking, swing/swivelling, springing, upside down, swinging (hammock, trim trail), rolling/tumbling

Jumping/bouncing activities – trampoline, gym ball, bed. Hop Scotch, Bunny hops & crab walks

Alternative seating – Hokki stool, Zuma chair, Disco sit cushion, seating wedge

Let the young person maintain the position they are happy and secure in/or regularly change position to maintain focus

Deep pressure / heavy muscle work (see proprioception section)

Visual markers for where the CYP needs to be  
Limit number of children and space for PE activities

Gradually increase challenges of equipment in PE  
Build up tolerance to having feet on the floor e.g. one foot, small distance then both feet

For motion sickness, gradual approach to increase tolerance

**These strategies stimulate the receptors in the inner ear.  
Be mindful of sensory overload.**



## PROPRIOCEPTION

Access to daily  
Sensory Motor Circuits

Activate/ Go Noodle

TACPAC

Barefoot play

Regular movement/sensory breaks

Ankle weights (time limited and appropriate weight)

Heavy muscle work e.g. weighted backpack, chair pushes, carrying resources

Pushing/Pulling – push with hands against the wall, pressing hands together, push ups, tug of war, sweeping floors, riding bikes, scooting, pushing wheelbarrows, lifting (carrying & moving)

Climbing – trim trail, monkey bars

Squeezing/Hugging – wrap in blanket, crawl under mats, bear hugs, log rolling, crashing on beanbags

Yoga – to stretch and relax muscles, develop core stability through balance work

Resistance activities -Theraband / lycra bodysock

Hand exercises before handwriting – e.g. pressing palms together, pulling each fingertip, press palms on to the desk, chair push ups with hands flat on seat, use of playdoh

Wrist weights (time limit)

Proactive input to reduce the likelihood of self-injurious behaviours

Discuss with families about tight fitting vest/underwear under clothes

Provide access to crunchy/chewy foods if appropriate or chew objects, vibrating toothbrush

Specific teaching of too much, too little force, scale, how can you tell?

Explicit teaching of social touch

Identify own space

Visual cues for sequence of dressing/undressing

Weighted pencil, Pen/pencil grip

Weighted vest/fleece (time limit)

Squeeze pressure vest (time limit)

Weighted lap pads

**"MANY CYP FIND  
PROPRIOCEPTIVE AND  
VESTIBULAR SENSORY  
ACTIVITIES MUCH MORE  
MOTIVATING THAN  
TRADITIONAL REWARDS"**



**Teaching strategies and routines e.g. going to the toilet**

**Labelling – ‘I can see you are hot ...’ (and how)**

**Point out what is visually different if they can’t “feel” it**

**Personalised visual cues**

**Offering food regularly if appropriate - this or that**

**Drink routinely - link to routines/ times of day**

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

### **It's developmental...**

This means that in some autistic individuals, it can take longer to 'develop' than in others.

### **It's influenced...**

By other senses. E.g. if a light is too bright, then a child may 'miss' their internal signal telling them that they need to go to the toilet, or that they're hungry.

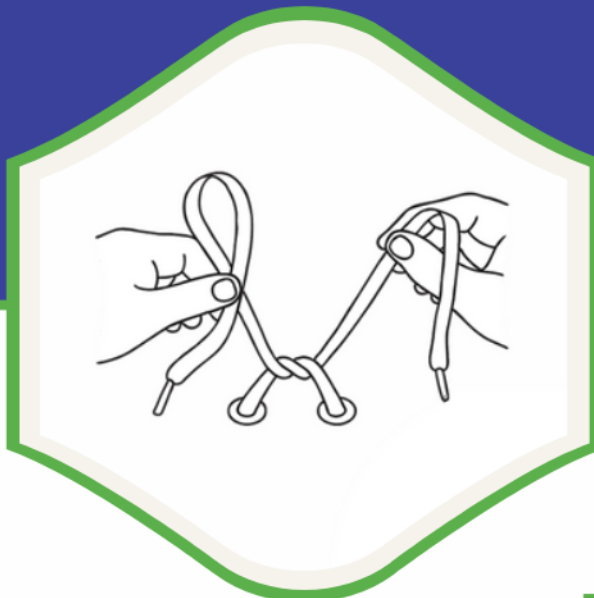
### **It fluctuates...**

More so than other sensory systems. This links to the spiky/uneven profile.

### **It's central...**

To our processing and integration. It's the sensory system we use to recognise and regulate our emotions.

## **FINE MOTOR SKILLS**



**Pencil types**

**Pen types**

**Pencil grips**

**Overwriting/tracing**

**Threading**

**Different types of scissors**

**Care cutlery**

**Dycem mats**

**Multi-sensory letters/shapes**

**Right size chair for the child or young person/foot stools**

**Writing slopes**

**Hand strength/Hand exercises  
- play doh, space putty, pegs**

**Movement breaks**

**Over-learning**

**Stacking blocks**

**Puzzles / fitting holes**

**Wrist weights (time limit)**

**Buttons, Zips, Laces**

**Bigger size moving to smaller**

**How are they copying/  
tracking? Do they need to  
have information  
immediately in front of the  
them?**

**Tweezers - 2 peg or Tripod**

**First Move resources**

# SECTION 5

**POSITIVE SENSORY PROFILING**

# HOW TO COMPLETE A POSITIVE SENSORY PROFILE

**THIS GUIDE CONTAINS AN  
EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETED  
POSITIVE SENSORY PROFILE, AS  
WELL AS A BLANK TEMPLATE**

**THIS GUIDE ALSO CONTAINS A  
TARGET SHEET. THIS IS USEFUL TO  
TRACK PROGRESS BUT CAN ALSO  
SUPPORT THE ASSESS, PLAN, DO,  
REVIEW CYCLE**

**REMEMBER TO CONSIDER THE  
INFORMATION GAINED FROM THE  
PARENT/CARER QUESTIONNAIRE  
WHEN COMPLETING THE POSITIVE  
SENSORY PROFILE**

# Positive Sensory Profile

**Name:** CYP name

Photo

## Sensory Preferences

What sensory sensations does the CYP 'choose' or seek to engage with? These will either be making them feel 'good' (calmer/regulated) and/or they are getting pleasure from.

Use the statements highlighted in the questionnaires and transfer the key information. This can be bullet points or a paragraph to describe the individual's behaviour.

## Sensory Aversions

This section states the situations/expectations that the child finds 'difficult' to manage – brings confusion, increases anxiety, provokes 'physical' discomfort (e.g. sensory etc)

Transfer key statements from the questionnaires.

## Positive Sensory Programme

Proactive interventions that aim to 'replicate' (wherever and whenever possible) the sensations described in the Sensory Preferences section above.

e.g.

- Teaching' (& providing opportunities to practice) self-regulating techniques
- Creating a personalised sensory 'diet' – how can these necessary activities become part of the child's day?
- Targeted 'motor' circuits (Alerting, Organising, Calming) to support the whole of the social communication profile

When an individual has achieved their optimum calm/alert state, their capacity to 'engage with' the more challenging expectations is significantly increased (building resilience)

## General Impression

Highlight most appropriate

**Low Registration**

**Sensory Seeking**

**Sensory Sensitivity**

**Sensory Avoiding**

## Sensory Support

Environment Control:

- What 'reasonable adjustments' may be necessary to the environment to enable the child to access school, social expectations and learning more successfully?

Individual support:

- What specific support will the CYP need to manage their sensory aversions with less anxiety and increased independence

# Positive Sensory Profile

**Name:**



## Sensory Preferences

## Sensory Aversions

## Positive Sensory Programme

## General Impression

*Highlight most appropriate*

**Low Registration**

**Sensory Seeking**

**Sensory Sensitivity**

**Sensory Avoiding**

## Sensory Support

# SENSORY TARGETS

Date:

Target

Impact

Date:

Target

Impact

Date:

Target

Impact

Date:

Target

Impact

# SECTION 6

## GLOSSARY

## Sensory Motor Circuit

A sensory motor circuit involves a sequence of physical activities that are designed to alert, organise and calm the child.

“Participation in a short daily sensory motor circuit prepares children to engage effectively with the day ahead.” (Jane Horwood)

## Sensory Seeking

Systems are ‘under’ sensitive to sensory input, or needs more of it to function. Child/Young Person will be seeking more sensory stimulation. The individual can become distracted whilst seeking additional sensory input.

## Sensory Avoiding

Systems are ‘over’ sensitive to sensory input. The Child/Young Person experiences sensory input more intensely than others. They will avoid certain activities/experiences because it is overwhelming to them.

## Low Registration

‘A pattern of sensory processing where the individual has a high threshold to sensory experiences and does not notice or detect changes in sensory situations at the same rate of others’ (Dunn 2007). The Child/Young Person may not appear to react and respond to sensations that others do.

## Sensory Sensitivity

Refers to how aware each person is with regard to each of their sensory systems and processing. Individuals have varying degrees of sensitivity and have varying ways of outwardly responding and expressing their awareness of these sensitivities. Some individuals detect very subtle stimuli in their surroundings and may become fearful of sudden noises, surprise touch etc (Dunn 2007)

## Sensory Hypersensitivity

A heightened sensitivity to stimulation of the senses. Over-sensitivity to sensory input from the environment or internal processing systems. Individuals will often complain about sensory stimuli that others perceive as ‘ordinary’.

## Sensory Hyposensitivity

Under-responsivity to stimulation of the senses, often making the individual wanting to seek more sensory input – e.g. constantly needing to touch or move, preferring strong smells and tastes

## Sensory Overload

When one or more of the body’s senses experiences over-stimulation from the environment. When the brain is overwhelmed by this input, it enters fight, flight, or freeze mode in response to what feels like a crisis, making the individual feel unsafe or even panicky.