

# SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER

## WHAT IS SENSORY PROCESSING:

Everyone learns through their senses. Whether you are biting into a cookie, riding a bicycle, or reading a book, your successful completion of the activity requires accurate processing of sensation. Sensory processing is how we change sensory information from within our own bodies and the outside environment into messages we can act on. It is tempting to think of our senses (touch, sight, sound, movement, body awareness, taste, and smell) as separate channels of information. However, all of the senses work together to give us a reliable picture of the world and our place in it.

## WHAT DOES SENSORY PROCESSING FEEL LIKE?

Right now your senses are working together. You hear background sounds and feel your clothing, chair, and the floor beneath your feet. You see letters on the paper. You filter out unimportant sounds and movement around you so you can make sense of what you are reading. If you occasionally lose focus because your shirt label is itchy you may have a mild sensory issue. If you keep sliding off your chair, look away when you hear a noise, feel like your shirt is hurting you, or the words you are reading pulsate, you may have sensory processing disorder. Sensory issues can affect all ages. For example, children with developmental delays, ADD or ADHD, and learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders and those without with out a specific diagnosis.

## HOW DOES SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER PRESENT IN CHILDREN?

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) may affect only one sense, for example, just touch or just sight or just movement, or multiple senses. One person with SPD may over-respond to touch sensation and find clothing, physical contact, or other tactile (sense of touch) input to be unbearable. A different person might under-respond and show little or no reaction to the same sensory input. They may not respond to pain or extreme temperatures, or just may be slow to respond to sensations.



*When a child has a sensory disorder, everyday noise can sound as confusing and overly stimulated as the look of a beautiful kaleidoscope.*

## WHEN TO GET HELP?

Since everyone falls somewhere on the sensory processing spectrum, it can be difficult to know when to seek help. If a child's ability to complete activities in their daily lives is being affected by difficulty processing or responding to certain sensory stimuli, it is time to seek help. Sensory Processing Disorder is treated through developing an individualized Sensory Diet and ACME can help!

## SIGNS OF SENSORY PROCESSING PROBLEMS

Over or under reacting to touch, sound, sight, movement, taste, or smell, such as;

- Clothing fabrics, labels, tags, etc.
- Distressed by light touch or unexpected touch
- Dislikes getting messy or resists grooming activities
- Very sensitive to sounds (volume or frequency)
- Squints, blinks, or rubs eyes frequently
- High activity level or very sedentary
- Unusually high or low pain threshold
- Moves awkwardly, seems clumsy, bumps into objects
- Fatigues easily
- Picky "eating" or frequent gagging or drooling
- Difficulty with transitions or changes in routine
- Bossy and tends to control play with peers
- Poor attention and focus: often "tunes out" or "acts up"
- Uncomfortable/easily over stimulated in group settings
- Poor self-confidence and decreased independence