

## What are sensory symptoms?

Every child with sensory challenges will have their own set of behaviours. These are usually a combinations of sensory avoidance and sensory seeking behaviours.

The following is a list of common symptoms. Your child may have just a few of these and not all of the symptoms.

### Tactile symptoms

- May avoid letting others touch them and would rather touch others.
- They frequently fuss or resist hair washing or cutting. They may act like their life is being threatened when being bathed or having clothes changed.
- They are often irritated by certain types of clothes, clothing labels or new clothes. They may dislike being close to others and avoid crowds.
- They can be agitated by people accidentally bumping into them. They often do not like to get their hands or feet dirty.
- Some may bump or crash into things on purpose as a way of seeking sensation or seem under-responsive to certain sensations or pain.

### Oral symptoms

Oral defensiveness is where there is an overly strong dislike or avoid certain textures or types of food.

- May be over or under sensitive to spicy or hot foods; avoid putting objects in their mouth; and/or intensely dislike tooth brushing or face washing.
- Your child may have had a variety of feeding problems since infancy.

### Gravitational Insecurity

- An irrational fear of change in position or movement e.g. having their feet leave the ground, or having their head tipped backwards.

### Postural Insecurity

- A fear and avoidance of certain movement activities due to poor postural mechanisms.

### Visual symptoms

This may involve an over sensitivity to light and visual distractibility.

- Avoiding going outside in certain light and/or need to wear hats or sunglasses to block out light.
- May startle more easily and/or avert their eyes or seem to avoid eye contact.

### Auditory symptoms

- Over sensitivity to certain sounds and may involve irritable or fearful responses to noises like vacuum cleaners, motors, fire alarms, etc.
- Sometimes individuals can be heard making excessive amounts of noise to block out sound.

### Hypersensitivity to sound

- May show as placing fingers over ears as if to block out the sound.
- If there is a lot of background noise or if someone is trying to have a conversation with you they may constantly interrupt, make noises and be generally disruptive.
- They may also have difficulty paying attention when there are noises nearby. They are also easily distracted by sounds which go unnoticed by others e.g. the hum of the fridge.

### Taste and smell

This may include unusual sensitivities taste and/or smell, perfumes or food.