

**1. What senses are involved in a sensory processing dysfunction?**

All senses can be involved, including senses of hearing, vision, touch, taste, and smell. We have additional sensations that are produced from inside our bodies that give us information about how we move, our balance, and where our bodies are. These are called the proprioceptive and vestibular senses. Pain is another internal sensation that is very helpful to our bodies in letting us know when something is wrong.

**2. How does a sensory processing concern affect learning?**

Our senses combine with each other in many ways that allow for focus in the classroom, organization of materials, and understanding what the teacher says and presents. Challenges to sequencing task steps may also occur. Difficulties result from missing or misinterpreted information in the brain. Increased energy needed to focus on one aspect of school may result in missing other important information and falling behind in class. Problems may include seeking movement to wake themselves up, being sensitive to sound/light/movement, poor body awareness/special awareness to others, and other concerns.

**3. What are some common signs of sensory dysfunction?**

Sensory dysfunction may present itself in many ways. This may include clumsiness, excessive movement seeking or fear of movement, intolerance to food textures, excessively loud behavior, becoming easily frustrated or withdrawing quickly, sensitivities to touch, and other concerns that seem “just not normal” for other children.

**4. How do I know if my child is having a tantrum (behavioral outburst) or if it is a result of poor sensory processing?**

A tantrum is intentional and elicited to manipulate a situation. Tantrums often are inconsistent between days and the child can calm quickly or suddenly once they receive what they wanted. Behaviors from poor sensory processing are the result of sensory overload or confusion, such as from stress, unexpected events, and poor tolerance to various sensory experiences. These behavior may appear to not have any motive and can have a much more prolonged response. Children can learn behavioral responses to discomfort from sensory processing challenges, making distinction difficult. Generally, behavioral approaches to a sensory problem will not be successful due to not treating the root problem.

**5. Should I keep my child on a routine? Does this help sensory processing?**

For a child who has a hard time interpreting the environment, keeping a routine, or using additional cues throughout the day (for example: in 5 minutes we are going to clean up) can help a child predict what is coming next, and help them correctly interpret the environment. Predictable events are much easier for the brain to understand and require less effort on the child's part, making success more likely.

**6. Will my child ever be cured of sensory integrative dysfunction?**

A child's brain is very changeable. Some kids are able to have neurons rewired to the extent that there is no residual dysfunction. Some tendencies may remain, in which case further adaptation can be made to accommodate these challenges. Some children may require more adaptation than others. Mostly, this is dependent on each individual child, family, and is also affected by the existence of other diagnosis or complications.

*Contact Primary Therapy Source for questions regarding  
Sensory Integration and Processing*

