

## Sensory Integration Disorders

What happens if one or more of our senses are not being interpreted properly? A child with vague or hazy feedback about his sense of touch, body position, or movement and gravity is in a world totally foreign to ours. Imagine yourself in a world where something as basic and reliable as the pull of gravity or other children's touch upon you is perceived as something unreliable, inconsistent, or threatening. You would not feel the usual security, safety, and fun that other children experience.

When the process of sensory integration is disordered, a number of problems in learning, motor development, or behavior may be observed:

### Sensory problem

Overly sensitive to touch, movements, sights, or sounds

Under-reactive to sensory stimulation

Unusually high/low activity level

Coordination problems

Delays in academic achievement or activities of daily living

Poor organization of behavior

Poor self-concept

### Signs or behavior

Behavior issues: distractible, withdrawing when touched, avoiding certain textures, clothes, foods. Fearful reaction to ordinary movement activities, like playground play. Sensitive to loud noises.

Seeks out intense sensory experiences, such as body whirling, falling, and crashing into objects. May fluctuate between under- and over-responsiveness.

Constantly on the move or may be slow to get going and then fatigue easily.

Could have poor balance; have great difficulty learning a new task that requires motor coordination or appears awkward, stiff, or clumsy.

May have problems in academic areas, despite normal or above intelligence. Could have problems with handwriting, using scissors, tying shoes, buttoning, and zipping clothes.

May be impulsive or distractible, show lack of planning in approach to tasks, or not anticipate result of actions. May have difficulty adjusting to a new situation or following directions. May get frustrated, aggressive, or withdrawn when encountering failure.

Could appear lazy, bored, or unmotivated. May avoid tasks and appear stubborn or troublesome.