

What is sensory processing?

Sensory processing is when our brain gets messages from our senses about what is happening around us or inside our body. Our brain helps to form messages and then tells our body to respond or act. When the sensory system has a hard time organizing this information, it may be hard to pay attention, play or calm down.

Common sensory processing behaviors

Sensory seeking

Child may:

- Love spinning, crashing into others, or lots of movement that get in the way of daily activities
- Like vibration or chewing on toys/ clothing

Sensory avoiding

Child may:

- Avoid or become upset with new movement or touch
- Be bothered by bright lights or hold hands over ears with loud sounds



Over-responsive

Child may:

- Have melt downs or tantrums in crowded places
- Dislike tags in clothing or getting hands/feet messy

Under-responsive

Child may:

- Seem like they are zoned out or not interested in activities
- Be unaware of bumps, cuts or messy hands, face or clothing

What can occupational therapy do?

Occupational therapy engages all your child's senses to strengthen and grow their sensory and motor skills.

- Occupational therapists look at a child's ability to function in play, participate at school, and enjoy activities of daily life.
- Every child with sensory difficulties is different and will benefit from a specific set of activities (sometimes called a sensory diet) to get to a "just right place".
- A sensory diet can help with self-regulation and the ability to stay alert and participate in activities throughout the day.



Resources

Books:

Understanding Your Child's Sensory Signals
by Angie Voss, OTR

The Out-of-Sync Child
by Carol Kranowitz

Websites/blogs:

- mamaot.com
- www.pathways.org/topics-of-development/7-senses/
- <https://www.spdstar.org/>

Information retrieved from
Duke Children's Sensory Processing handout



Contact us

Blount Outpatient Center

352 Fountain View Circle
Alcoa, TN 37701
Phone: (865) 518-0995
Fax: (865) 982-9216

Downtown

Medical Office Building, Suite 130
2100 Clinch Avenue
Knoxville, TN 37916
Phone: (865) 541-8912
Fax: (865) 693-3941

Emory Center

207 E. Emory Road
Powell, TN 37849
Phone: (865) 343-6983
Fax: (865) 693-3941

Rehabilitation Center

1025 Children's Way
Knoxville, TN 37922
Phone: (865) 690-8961
Fax: (865) 693-3941

Sevier Outpatient Center

502 Winfield Dunn Pkwy
Sevierville, TN 37876
Phone: (865) 280-6526
Fax: (866) 610-2903



Occupational Therapy

Sensory Processing

What can occupational therapy do to help?

