



**SOUTHPAW®**

## **HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD HAS SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER?**

Sensory processing is used to describe how the nervous system receives information from the body's senses and then turns that information into a response. When discussing Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), individuals who are affected by this present with disorganized or inappropriate responses. The sensory system is made up of seven areas, tactile, olfactory, auditory, visual, taste, vestibular, and proprioception (sense of body/joint movement and knowing where the body is in space).

SPD can manifest in over (hyper-) or under (hypo-) responsiveness, as well as craving or avoidance. In addition, you may see signs in poor movement and balance. All children (and adults) demonstrate some symptoms of SPD, however they require professional intervention when the symptoms are disrupting the child's ability to function and carry out day-to-day life. In many cases, you may notice symptoms in more than one area, but they can show themselves in a single area as well.

Therefore, just because your child loves spinning on the merry-go-round or daughter hates to participate in finger painting at school does not mean they need to be diagnosed with SPD, however we are providing a quick checklist to help identify whether or not it is necessary for you to speak to your doctor and seek out the professional help of an occupational therapist.

In addition, if you have an infant who is cranky often or for long periods of times, it would be beneficial to have a sensory evaluation completed to rule out SPD or any other underlying issues.

This is the checklist, so there is no “magic” number that tells you when you should seek help. We are providing this as a starting point.

Once completed, please share with you professional team of doctors and/or therapists. It is important to note that SPD symptoms are often seen in other diagnosis such as Autism, ADHD, Down Syndrome, etc, but in some cases is a stand-alone diagnosis.

**Fill out as appropriate:**

\_\_\_\_ My child has problems eating, including difficulty eating various textures.

\_\_\_\_ My child is clingy and does not like to be held by others.

\_\_\_\_ My child has trouble falling asleep or staying asleep

\_\_\_\_ My child becomes upset when dressing due to the feel of his/her clothes.

\_\_\_\_ My child demonstrates little interest in toys.

\_\_\_\_ My child dislikes playing in the sand, grass, etc.

\_\_\_\_ My child demonstrates little interest in others.

\_\_\_\_ My child has difficulty shifting focus and attention from one thing to another.

\_\_\_\_ My child does not notice pain or is slow to respond when hurt.

\_\_\_\_ My child does not like to be held, arching back away from the person holding him or her.

\_\_\_\_ My child has a difficulty time being consoled or

calmed. Tantrums or periods of frustration appear to last for prolonged amounts of time.

\_\_\_\_ My child appears to be clumsy, often falling and bumping into things.

\_\_\_\_ My child does little or no babbling, vocalizing.

\_\_\_\_ My child becomes startled or scared easily.

\_\_\_\_ My child is constantly on the move.

\_\_\_\_ My child moves little and is found to play with only sedentary things.

\_\_\_\_ My child seems to develop at a slower rate than peers.

\_\_\_\_ My child has difficulty being toilet trained.

\_\_\_\_ My child is overly sensitive to stimulation, overreacting to inputs of touch, smell, taste, etc.

\_\_\_\_ My child demonstrates little awareness of being touched/bumped or is seen as always bumping into others and objects.

\_\_\_\_ My child has demonstrates little interest in fine motor tasks and struggles in school.

\_\_\_\_ My child lacks interest in playground equipment, including swings.

\_\_\_\_ My child appears to lack coordination during play and when playing sports.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child has difficulty learning new motor tasks.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child has the need to touch others, things, and fidgets with his hands.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child has difficulty making friends.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child demonstrates difficulty with transitions.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child has sudden mood changes and temper tantrums that are unexpected.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child seems weak, demonstrating difficulty holding his body up when sitting/standing.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child demonstrates poor speech, is difficult to understand.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child does not seem to understand verbal instructions.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child dislikes being upside down.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child is easily distracted in the classroom, often out of his/her seat, fidgety.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child is easily overwhelmed in crowded places.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child is slow to perform tasks.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child enjoys rough housing, tackling/wrestling games.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child seems to only eat one type of food (ie. crunchy, soft, spicy, etc)

\_\_\_\_\_ My child becomes upset or tantrums with loud sounds, ie. the hairdryer, lawn mower, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ My child can spin without getting dizzy.