

Signs of Tactile Dysfunction:

1. Hypersensitivity to Touch (Tactile Defensiveness)

- becomes fearful, anxious or aggressive with light or unexpected touch
- as an infant, did/does not like to be held or cuddled; may arch back, cry, and pull away
- distressed when diaper is being, or needs to be changed
- appears fearful of, or avoids standing in close proximity to other people or peers (especially in lines)
- becomes frightened when touched from behind or by someone/ something they cannot see (such as under a blanket)
- complains about having their hair brushed; maybe very picky about using a particular brush
- bothered by rough sheets (i.e., if old and “bumpy”)
- avoids group situations for fear of the unexpected touch
- resists friendly or affectionate touch from anyone besides parents or siblings (and sometimes them too)
- dislikes kisses, will “wipe off” place where kissed
- prefers hugs
- a raindrop, water from the shower, or wind blowing on the skin may feel like torture and produce adverse and avoidance reactions
- may overreact to minor cuts, scrapes, and or bug bites
- avoids touching certain textures of materials (blankets, rugs, stuffed animals)
- refuses to wear new or stiff clothes, clothes with rough textures, turtlenecks, jeans, hats, belts, etc
- avoids using hands for play

___ avoids/dislikes/adverse to “messy play”, i.e., sand, mud, water, glue, glitter, playdoh, slime, shaving cream/funny foam, etc

___ will be distressed by dirty hands and want to wipe or wash them frequently

___ excessively ticklish

___ distressed by seams in socks and may refuse to wear them

___ distressed by clothes rubbing on skin; may want to wear shorts and short sleeves all year round, toddlers may prefer to be naked and pull diapers and clothes off constantly

___ or may want to wear long sleeve shirts all year round to avoid having skin exposed

___ distressed about having face washed

___ distressed about having hair, toenails, or fingernails cut

___ resists brushing teeth and is extremely fearful of the dentist

___ is a picky eater, only eats certain tastes and textures; mixed textures tend to be avoided as well as hot or cold foods; resists trying new foods

___ may refuse to walk barefoot on grass or sand

___ may walk on toes only

2. Hyposensitivity to Touch (Under-Responsive)

___ may crave touch, needs to touch everyone and everything

___ is not aware of being touched/bumped unless done with extreme force or intensity

___ is not bothered by injuries, like cuts and bruises, and shows no distress with shots

___ may not be aware that hands or face are dirty or feel their nose running

___ may be self-abusive; pinching, biting, or banging their head

___ mouths objects excessively

- ___ frequently hurts other children or pets while playing
- ___ repeatedly touches surfaces or objects that are soothing
- ___ seeks out surfaces and textures that provide strong tactile feedback
- ___ thoroughly enjoys and seeks out messy play
- ___ craves vibrating or strong sensory input
- ___ has a preference and craving for excessively spicy, sweet, sour, or salty foods

3. Poor Tactile Perception and Discrimination

- ___ has difficulty with fine motor tasks such as buttoning, zipping, and fastening clothes
- ___ may not be able to identify which part of their body was touched if they were not looking
- ___ may be afraid of the dark
- ___ may be a messer dresser; looks disheveled, does not notice pants are twisted, shirt is half untucked, once pant leg is up and one is down, etc
- ___ has difficulty using scissors, crayons, or silverware
- ___ continues to mouth objects to explore them even after age 2
- ___ has difficulty figuring out physical characteristics of objects; shape, size, texture, temperature, weight, etc
- ___ may not be able to identify objects by feel, uses vision to help; such as, reaching into backpack or desk to retrieve an item

Auditory-Language Processing Dysfunction:

- ___ unable to locate the source of a sound
- ___ difficulty identifying people's voices
- ___ difficulty discriminating between sounds/words; i.e., "dare" and "dear"

- ___ difficulty filtering out other sounds while trying to pay attention to one person talking
- ___ bothered by loud, sudden, metallic, or high-pitched sounds
- ___ difficulty attending to, understanding, and remembering what is said or read; often asks for directions to be repeated and may only be able to understand or follow two sequential directions at a time
- ___ looks at others to/for reassurance before answering
- ___ difficulty putting ideas into words (written or verbal)
- ___ often talks out of turn or “off topic”
- ___ if not understood, has difficulty re-phrasing; may get frustrated, angry and give up
- ___ difficulty reading, especially out loud (may also be dyslexic)
- ___ difficulty articulating and speaking clearly
- ___ ability to speak often improves after intense movement

Social, Emotional, Play, and Self-Regulation

Dysfunction:

Social:

- ___ difficulty getting along with peers
- ___ prefers playing by self with objects or toys rather than with people
- ___ does not interact reciprocally with peers or adults; hard to have a “meaningful” two-way conversation
- ___ self-abusive or abusive to others

others have a hard time interpreting child's cues, needs, or emotions

does not seek out connections with familiar people

Emotional:

difficulty accepting changes in routine (to the point of tantrums)

gets easily frustrated

often impulsive

functions best in small groups or individually

variable and quickly changing moods; prone to outbursts and tantrums

prefers to play on the outside, away from groups, or just be an observer

avoids eye contact

difficulty appropriately making needs known

Play:

difficulty with imitative play (over 10 months)

wanders aimlessly without purposeful play or exploration (over 15 months)

needs adult guidance to play, difficulty playing independently (over 18 months)

participates in repetitive play for hours; i.e., lining up toy cars, blocks, watching one movie over and over etc

Self-Regulation:

excessive irritability, fussiness or colic as an infant

can't calm or soothe self through pacifier, comfort object, or caregiver

can't go from sleeping to awake without distress

requires excessive help from caregiver to fall asleep; i.e., rubbing back or head, rocking, long walks, or car rides

Internal Regulation (The Interoceptive Sense):

___ becoming too hot or too cold sooner than others in the same environments; may not appear to ever get hot/cold, may not be able to maintain body temperatures effectively

___ difficulty in extreme temperatures or going from one extreme to another (i.e., winter, summer, going from air conditioning to outside heat, a heated house to the cold outside)

___ respiration is too fast, too slow, or cannot switch from one to the other easily as the body demands an appropriate respiratory response

___ heart rate that speeds up or slows down too fast or too slow based on the demands imposed on it

___ respiration and heart rate that takes longer than what is expected to slow down during or after exertion or fear

___ severe/several mood swings throughout the day (angry to happy in short periods of time, perhaps without visible cause)

___ unpredictable state of arousal or inability to control arousal level (hyper lethargic, quickly changing between the two; over stimulated to under stimulated, within hours or days, depending on activity and setting, etc)

___ frequent constipation or diarrhea, or mixed during the same day or over a few days

___ difficulty with potty training; does not seem to know when they have to go (i.e., cannot feel the necessary sensation that bowel or bladder is full)

___ unable to regulate thirst; always thirsty, never thirsty, or oscillates back and forth

___ unable to regulate hunger; eats all the time, won't eat at all, unable to feel hungry/full

___ unable to regulate appetite; has little to no appetite and/or will be “starving” one minute then full two bites later, then back to hungry again (prone to eating disorders and/or failure to thrive)

Signs of Visual Input Dysfunction (No Diagnosed Visual Deficit):

1. Hypersensitivity to Visual Input (Over-Responsiveness)

___ sensitive to bright lights; will squint, cover eyes, cry and/or get headaches from the lights

___ has difficulty keeping eyes focused on task/activity they are working on for an appropriate amount of time

___ easily distracted by other visual stimuli in the room; i.e., movement, decorations, toys, windows, doorways, etc

___ has difficulty in bright colorful rooms or dimly lit rooms

___ rubs their eyes, has watery eyes or gets headaches after reading or watching tv

___ avoids eye contact

___ enjoys playing in the dark

2. Hyposensitivity to Visual Input (Under-Responsive or Difficulty with Tracking, Discrimination, or Perception)

___ has difficulty telling the difference between similar printed letters or figures; i.e., p & q, b & d, + and x, or squares and rectangles

___ has a hard time seeing the “big picture”; i.e., focuses on the details or patterns within the picture

___ has difficulty locating items among other items; i.e., papers on the desk, clothes in a drawer, items on a grocery shelf, toys in a bin

___ often loses place when copying from a book or the chalk board

- difficulty controlling eye movement to track and follow moving objects
- has difficulty telling the difference between different colors, shapes, and sizes
- often loses their place while reading or doing math problems
- makes reversals in words or letters when copying, or reads words backwards; i.e., “was” for “saw” and “no” for “on” after first grade
- complains about “seeing double”
- difficulty finding differences in pictures, words, symbols, or objects
- difficulty with consistent spacing and size of letters during writing and/or lining up numbers in math problems
- difficulty with jigsaw puzzles, copying shapes, and/or cutting/tracing along a line
- tends to write at a slant (up or down hill) on a page
- confuses left and right
- fatigues easily with school work
- difficulty judging spatial relationships in the environment; i.e., bumps into objects/people or missteps on curbs or stairs

Signs of Olfactory Dysfunction (Smells):

1. Hypersensitivity to Smells (Over-Responsive)

- reacts negatively to, or dislikes smells which do not usually bother, or get noticed, by other people
- tells other people (or talks about) how bad or funny they smell
- refuses to eat certain foods because of their smell
- offended and/or nauseated by bathroom odors or personal hygiene smells

- bothered/irritated by smell of perfume or cologne
- bothered by household cooking smells
- may refuse to play at someone's house because of the way it smells
- decides whether they like someone or some place by the way it smells

2. Hyposensitivity to Smells (Under-Responsive)

- has difficulty discriminating unpleasant odors
- may eat or drink things that are poisonous because they do not notice the noxious smell
- unable to identify smells from scratch and sniff stickers
- does not notice odors that others usually complain about
- fails to notice or ignores unpleasant odors
- makes excessive use of smelling when introduced to objects, people, or places
- uses smell to interact with objects

Signs of Oral Input Dysfunction:

1. Hypersensitivity to Oral Input (Oral Defensiveness)

- picky eater, often with extreme food preferences; i.e., limited repertoire of foods, picky about brands, resistive to trying new foods or restaurants, and may not eat at other people's houses
- may only eat "soft" or pureed foods past 24 months of age
- has difficulty with sucking, chewing, and swallowing; may choke or have fear of choking
- resists/refuses/extremely fearful about going to the dentist or having dental work done
- may only eat hot or cold foods
- refuses to lick envelopes, stamps, or stickers because of their taste
- dislikes or complains about toothpaste and mouthwash

___ avoids seasoned, salty, spicy, sour, or sweet foods; prefers bland foods

2. Hyposensitivity to Oral Input (Under-Responsive)

___ may lick, taste, or chew on inedible objects

___ prefers foods with intense flavor; i.e., excessively spicy, salty, sour, or sweet

___ excessive drooling past the teething stage

___ frequently chews on hair, shirt, or fingers

___ constantly putting objects in mouth past the toddler years

___ acts as if all food tastes the same

___ can never get enough condiments or seasoning on their food

___ loves vibrating toothbrushes and trips to the dentist

Signs of Vestibular Dysfunction:

1. Hypersensitivity to Movement (Over-Responsive)

___ avoids/ dislikes playground equipment; i.e., swings, ladders, slides

___ prefers sedentary tasks, moving slowly and carefully, avoids taking risks, and may appear “wimpy”

___ avoids/dislikes elevators and escalators; may prefer sitting while they are on them or, actually get motion sickness from them

___ may physically cling to an adult they trust

___ may appear terrified of falling even when there is no real risk of it

___ afraid of heights, even the height of a curb or a step

___ fearful of feet leaving the ground

___ fearful of going up or down stairs or walking on an uneven surface

___ afraid of being tipped sideways, backwards, or upside down; will strongly resist getting their hair washed over a sink

___ startles if someone else moves them; i.e., pushes their chair closer to the table

- ___ as an infant, may never have liked swing or jumpers
- ___ may be fearful of, and have difficulty riding a bike, jumping, hopping, or balancing on one foot (especially if eyes are closed)
- ___ may have dislikes being placed on their stomach as an infant
- ___ loses balance easily and may appear clumsy
- ___ fearful of activities which require good balance
- ___ avoids rapid or rotating movement

2. Hyposensitivity to Movement (Under-Responsive)

- ___ in constant motion, can't seem to sit still
- ___ craves fast, spinning, and/or intense spinning experiences
- ___ loves being tossed in the air
- ___ can spin for hours and never appear to get dizzy
- ___ loves the fast, intense, and/or scary rides at amusement parks
- ___ always jumping on furniture, trampolines, spinning in a swivel chair, or getting into upside down positions
- ___ loves to swing as high as possible and for long periods of time
- ___ is a "thrill-seeker"; dangerous at times
- ___ always running, jumping, hopping, etc. instead of walking
- ___ rocks body, shakes leg or head while sitting
- ___ likes sudden or quick movements, such as going over a big bump in the car or on a bike

3. Poor Muscle Tone and/or Coordination

- ___ has a limp, "floppy" body
- ___ frequently slumps, lies down, and/or leans head on hand or arm while working at their desk
- ___ difficulty simultaneously lifting head, arms, and legs off the floor while lying on stomach ("superman" position)

- ___ often sits in “W sit” position on the floor to stabilize body
- ___ fatigues easily
- ___ compensates for “looseness” by grasping objects tightly
- ___ difficulty turning doorknobs, handles, opening and closing items
- ___ difficulty catching themselves if falling
- ___ difficulty getting dressed and doing fasteners, zippers, and buttons
- ___ may have never crawled as a baby
- ___ has poor body awareness; bumps into things, knocks things over, trips, and/or appears clumsy
- ___ poor gross motor skills; jumping jacks, climbing a ladder, etc
- ___ poor fine motor skills; difficulty using “tools”, such as pencils, silverware, combs, scissors, etc
- ___ may appear ambidextrous, frequently switching hands for coloring, cutting, writing, etc; does not have an established hand preference/ dominance by 4 or 5 years old
- ___ has difficulty licking an ice cream cone
- ___ seems unsure about how to move body during movement, for example, stepping over something
- ___ difficulty learning exercise or dance steps

Signs of Proprioceptive Dysfunction:

1. Sensory Seeking Behavior

- ___ seeks out jumping, bumping, or crushing activities
- ___ stomps feet while walking
- ___ kicks their feet on floor or chair while sitting at a desk/table
- ___ bites or sucks on fingers and/or frequently cracks knuckles
- ___ loves to be wrapped in many or weighted blankets, especially at bedtime

- prefers clothes (and belt, hoods, shoelaces) to be as tight as possible
- loves/seekes out “squishing” activities
- enjoys bear hugs
- excessive banging on/with toys and objects
- loves “roughhousing” and tackling/wrestling games
- frequently falls on floor intentionally
- would jump on trampoline for hours on end
- grinds their teeth throughout the day
- loves pushing/pulling/dragging objects
- loves jumping off furniture or from high places
- frequently hits, bumps, or pushes other children
- chews on pens, straws, shirt sleeves, etc

2. Difficulty with “Grading of Movement”

- misjudges how much to flex and extend muscles during tasks/activities (i.e. putting arm into sleeve or climbing)
- difficulty regulating pressure when writing/drawing; may be too light to see or so hard the tip of writing utensil breaks
- written work is messy and the often rip the paper when erasing
- always seems to be breaking objects and toys
- misjudges the weight of an object, such as a glass of juice, picking it up with too much force sending it flying or spilling, or with too little force and complaining about objects being too heavy
- may not understand the idea of “heavy” or “light”; would not be able to hold two objects and tell you which one weighs more
- seems to do everything with too much force; i.e., walking, slamming doors, pressing things too hard, slamming objects down
- plays with animals with too much force, often hurting them

Signs of Auditory Dysfunction (No Diagnosed Hearing Problem):

1. Hypersensitivity to Sound (Auditory Defensiveness)

distracted by sounds not normally noticed by others; i.e., humming of lights or refrigerators, fans, heaters, or clocks ticking

fearful of the sound of a flushing toilet (especially in a public bathroom), vacuum, hairdryer, squeaky shoes, or a dog barking

startled/distracted by loud or unexpected sounds

bothered/distracted by background environmental sounds; i.e., lawn mowing or outside construction

frequently asks people to be quiet; i.e., stop making noise, talking, or singing

runs away, cries, and/or covers ear with loud or unexpected noises

may refuse to go to movie theaters, parades, skating rinks, musical concerts, etc

may decide whether they like certain people by the sound of their voice

2. Hyposensitivity to Sounds (Under-Registers)

often does not respond to verbal cues or name being called

appears to “make noise for the sake of making noise”

loves excessively loud music or TV

seems to have difficulty understanding or remembering what was said

appears oblivious to certain sounds

appears confused about where a sound is coming from

talks self through a task, often out loud

had little or no vocalizing or babbling as an infant

needs directions repeated, or will say “What?” frequently

