


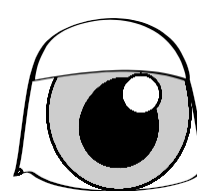

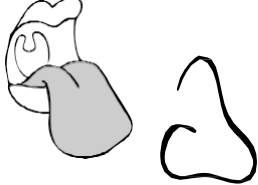


Common Difficulties with the Sensory System: What You May See

System	Over-responsive behaviour indicators	Under-responsive behaviour indicators
Tactile (touch) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not like to be touched Avoid tasks with strong tactile element (clay, water play, paint, food preparation) Complains about discomfort of clothing Responds negatively to textures in foods, toys, furniture Overly upset by cuts and bruises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not seem to grasp concept of personal space Does not seem to notice touch of others Frequently puts things into mouth Does not adjust clothing, which would seem to be an irritant High pain threshold, unaware of danger because of low response to pain
Vestibular (balance, movement) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over-reacts to movement activities Has difficulties navigating on different surfaces (carpet, grass, stones) Walks close to walls, clings to supports such as banisters Fearful of movement, heights, being upside down Rigid about positioning of body Seems to become physically disoriented at times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seems to need constant movement Rocks, travels in circles Seems to tire easily when engaged in movement activities Generally slow to move, lethargic in movement Takes long time to respond to directions to move
Proprioceptive (body awareness, positioning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeks out movements such as stomping while walking, jumping from high places, falling on purpose Has difficulty with force and stability – cannot distinguish between light and heavy, applies too much force in every-day activities Rips paper while writing/erasing Leans into people or wants big hugs Poor motor planning in gross and fine motor activities Seems unaware of body in space, clumsy Plays too rough 	
Visual (sight) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disturbed by bright lighting Avoids sunlight Follows any movement in room with eyes Covers part of visual field, puts hands over part of page of book Responds physically to appearance of certain objects or colours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unaware of presence of other people Unable to locate desired objects, people Loses sight of objects when they move Has difficulty differentiating shapes, colours Can't distinguish objects from each other

<p>Auditory (hearing)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily distracted by background noise • Frightened or startled by noise • Screams or cries at sounds in the environment • Responds physically if sound is a threat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not respond to verbal cues • Seems oblivious to sounds or surrounding activities • Creates constant sounds as if to stimulate themselves • Enjoys loud music or television • Unsafe because does not react to sounds indicating potential danger
<p>Gustatory and Olfactory (taste and smell)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eats a limited variety of foods • Gags, refuses foods • Difficulties with oral hygiene • Spits out foods, medications • Has difficulty sucking • Over-reacts to smells in environment • Smell defensive, will avoid places or people with strong odours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seems to be constantly wanting food • Licks objects in the environment • Chews on objects inappropriately • High threshold for bad tastes – dangerous substances are not avoided • Sniffs people or objects in unusual ways • Does not seem to notice smells others notice

Based on information from:

1. Province of British Columbia, www.ipp.gov.bc.ca
2. Dunn, W., Saiter, J., & Rinner, L. (2002). Asperger syndrome and sensory processing: A conceptual model and guidance for intervention planning. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities Special Issue Asperger syndrome*, 17(3), 172-185.