



**Special Needs
Inclusion Program**

—
TRENTON MFRC

SENSORY PROCESSING CHALLENGES EXPLAINED

This handout provides insight
into what sensory processing
is and how it can affect
individuals within their daily
lives.

RECOGNIZING SENSORY CHALLENGES

Sensory processing challenges can be recognized in early childhood years. Parents may notice that their child has an unusual aversion to noises, lighting, shoes and/or clothes that feel irritating. Clumsiness, trouble climbing stairs, and difficulty with fine motor skills such as holding a pencil and fastening buttons may also be noticed.

Some extreme behaviours that may be exhibited include:

- Screaming when uncomfortable
- Throwing tantrums when getting dressed or wearing clothing
- Having an unusual tolerance to pain or a very low pain tolerance
- Bumping into walls and/or people
- Putting inedible items in their mouth

Difficulty with processing information from different senses can result in feeling overwhelmed. Your child may have challenges communicating how or what they are feeling which can translate into frustration.



I THINK MY CHILD MAY HAVE SENSORY CHALLENGES

If your child is exhibiting challenging behaviours or an aversion to certain stimuli, fleeing situations when overwhelmed, having extreme tantrums or mood swings, your child may be experiencing sensory challenges. If you suspect your child is struggling, begin to track their behaviour and the stimuli they may be reacting to. You can track these things by jotting them down when they happen. It will help you to discover any trends in their behaviour and/or point out what they find overwhelming.

SELF-REGULATION

Children with sensory challenges might also experience difficulty with their self-regulation. This includes tantruming, taking prolonged periods of time to down regulate, or appearing inconsolable. Over all regulating emotions can become overwhelming and challenging. This leads to the extreme behaviours parents may see in their child.



HYPO VS. HYPER-SENSITIVITY

Hyposensitivity: a child who is hyposensitive will usually seek out stimuli. Behaviours you may see include, bumping into walls, rolling around on the floor, excessive hugging or physical contact, sometimes self injurious behaviour can occur.

Hypersensitivity: a child who is hypersensitive will experience sensory-overloads which leads to feelings of being overwhelmed. Noise, touch, and visual stimuli can be challenging to process for children who are hypersensitive.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS SENSORY CHALLENGES

If you think your child may have sensory challenges, a referral to an Occupation Therapist is recommended. Occupational Therapists can assist by completing an assessment about your child and their sensory needs.

Occupational Therapists use a controlled environment to assess sensory input and create a specialized plan for your child. The plan can include exercises, activities, and assistive devices/items to help.



REFERRAL PROCESS

Ask your Doctor for a referral to an Occupational Therapist. The Special Needs Inclusion Team at the Trenton Military Family Resource Centre can also assist with a referral to an Occupational Therapist.

Some local agencies accept self-referrals. You can call local places to ask what their requirements are for an Occupational Assessment appointment to be scheduled.

RESOURCES

<https://www.cheo.on.ca/en/resources-and-support/sensory-processing-disorder.aspx#Books>

<https://childmind.org/article/sensory-processing-faq/>



THE SPECIAL NEEDS INCLUSION TEAM IS HERE TO HELP!

Contact us with your questions or for support

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