

# Sensory Integration Disorder



Sensory Integration Disorder (SID) is a complex neurological disorder that leads to difficulty with processing information gathered by the senses, organizing that information, and using that information effectively. For individuals with this disorder,

sensory information is processed by the brain in an unusual manner that results in distress, confusion, or inappropriate behavior. Sensory Integration Disorder may impact your child's academics, behavior, and/or social interactions due to problems with focusing, attending, accepting changes, and delayed or impaired motor-skill development. **There are three different subtypes of Sensory Integration Disorders: Sensory Modulation Disorder, Sensory Discrimination Disorder, and Sensory-Based Motor Disorder.**

Sensory Modulation Disorder is an oversensitivity or under-sensitivity to stimuli. Children who are oversensitive may be easily upset and distressed by loud sounds, bright colors, odors, and certain fabrics. These children may be picky eaters, become upset during daily grooming routines, or dislike getting their hands dirty. Children who are under sensitive may be thrill-seekers, seek sensory stimulation through highly physical activities, fall frequently, pinch or bite themselves, or bang their heads. They do not seem to feel physical pain or extreme temperatures. They may put things into their mouth excessively and often lose their place when copying or doing school work.

Sensory Discrimination Disorder and Sensory-Based Motor Disorder impact a child's ability to move in an organized way. Children with these sensory disorders may not be able to tell the difference between various shapes, sizes, colors, and

weights of objects. These children may rely on visual cues to identify objects because feeling the object is not sufficient. They may have difficulty with their posture and problems planning and completing everyday tasks.

A comprehensive list of symptoms can be found at [sensory-processing-disorder.com](http://sensory-processing-disorder.com).

## Recommendations

### **1. Consult with an occupational therapist who specializes in Sensory Integration Dysfunction.**

- Occupational therapists can be found through the SPD website listed below.
- Local specialists include: Therapediatrics, 55 Village Square Dr. Wakefield, RI (401) 284-4357

### **2. Consider the environment in which you place your child.**

Children who are oversensitive to stimuli may become easily overwhelmed by loud noises or over activity. Children who are under-sensitive to stimuli may also not be able to react appropriately in these situations. Do not restrict children from activities, but gradually introduce them to situations in smaller doses at times when the intensity may be lower.

**3. Include swimming, hiking, and other strenuous physical activity as part of the child's daily routine.** There is strong evidence that a physical exercise program prior to school can be very helpful for improving children's attention and learning and reduce difficulties with sensory disorders.

**4. Engage your child in doing outdoor chores such as raking leaves, shoveling snow, or sweeping the driveway.** Help the child to become more closely in touch with the physical sensations of movement and effort.

**5. Provide ample stimulation through wobble or balance boards or a "porcupine" pillow to place on the child's seat.**

“Fidgets,” toys that children can quietly manipulate, could be used at the student’s desk (purchasable through [www.addconsults.com/store](http://www.addconsults.com/store)). Weighted blankets like the “Magic Blanket,” which can be found through Bean Blanket, can also provide beneficial stimulation.

**6. Take measures to control the amount of stimuli children receive.** Use sunglasses and/or hats, earplugs, or noise-reducing earphones for children who are over-sensitive to stimuli. If your child is unable to wear certain fabrics, only purchase clothing that is made out of soft cotton and cut the tags out of all clothes. Engage children who are under-sensitive to stimuli in highly physical activities. Let them play Dance Dance Revolution or some of the more physically demanding sports games on the Wii. Enroll them in organized sports or other activities.

## Websites

Learning Works for Kids.: The premier site for executive function information. It provides a wealth of up-to-date tips and recommendations for children with all types of disorders and disabilities.

[Sensory Processing Disorder Foundation.](#): The goal of this site is to expand knowledge, foster awareness, and promote recognition of Sensory Processing Disorder. The site offers further information about SPD treatments, research, and much more.

[Comeunity.](#): This site contains a variety of articles to help your child with sensory- integration issues.

# Books

Ayres, A. Jean. (2005). *Sensory Integration and the Child: 25th Anniversary Edition*. Los Angeles, CA: Western Psychological Services.

Godwin Emmons, Polly and Liz McKendry Anderson. (2005). *Understanding Sensory Dysfunction: Learning, Development, and Sensory Dysfunction in Autism Spectrum Disorders, ADHD, Learning Disabilities, and Bipolar Disorder*. London, England: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Miller, Lucy Jane and Doris A. Fuller. (2007). *Sensational Kids: Hope and Help for Children with Sensory Processing Disorder*. New York, NY: Perigee Trade.

Stock Kranowitz, Carol, M.A. (2003). *The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun: Activities for Kids with Sensory Integration Dysfunction*. New York, NY: Perigee Trade.

Stock Kranowitz, Carol, M.A. (1998). *The Out-of-Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Integration Dysfunction*. New York, NY: Perigee Trade.