

Sensory Profile

Hello and welcome to A regulated families child's sensory profile.

To make things simpler, this profile is divided into two areas: seeking and avoiding. In reality, it's not always that straightforward, but this is a helpful way to start building a picture without making things overly complicated.

Go through the profile with your child and consider whether they relate more to seeking or avoiding behaviours. You can highlight the statements that apply, or cross out the ones that don't. This isn't about being medically precise, it's about understanding your child better.

We've also included some hints and tips after each section, so you can begin to explore strategies to support your child as you go along.

Visual Seeking



Looks for bright/flashing lights
Enjoys lining up items in rows or by colour
Enjoys playing with toys that spin
Loves to play with shiny objects
Appears to enjoy games which involve bumping and crashing different toys
Stands too close to interactive whiteboard/screen

Tips to support a visually seeking child:

Provide lots of visual input (e.g. colourful toys, lights, movement like bubbles or spinning objects).
Create opportunities for safe visual exploration

Visual Avoiding



Overly sensitive to bright lights (may complain or close eyes)
Easily distracted by bright displays
Finds 'busy' rooms challenging
Seeks out dark spaces
Often rubs eyes when focusing on work
Avoids eye contact with others

Tips to support a visually avoiding child:

Try using softer lighting at home, avoid the big light.
Invest in a dark tent or black out blinds so your child can find the darkness they seek.

Tactile Seeking



Enjoys touching everyone/everything
May not recognise when they have been touched (unless forcefully)
Unaware when they have dirty hands/runny nose
Seeks messy play
Repeatedly seeks out certain surfaces and textures e.g. rough brick walls, smooth worktops
Repeatedly rubs or brushes objects on their face/lips
Enjoys getting messy e.g. will play in puddle with hands

Tips to support a tactile seeking child:

Help them “find their thing”.
Offer a range of different textures to explore
Provide fidgets with different types of feedback you may need to try a few before finding the right one.

Tactile Avoiding



Dislikes being touched unexpectedly
Avoids having their hair brushed
Dislikes being close to others (lining up)
Sensitive to certain items of clothing or labels
Rarely wants to be held/cuddled
Overly sensitive when they hurt themselves
Avoids touching certain fabrics/textures e.g. velvet
Dislikes hands getting messy - may wash hands frequently
Walks on tiptoes on new surfaces/textures

Tips to support a tactile avoiding child:

Think carefully about clothing choices and what feels comfortable.
If you find something they love, buy multiples.
Reduce irritation by turning socks inside out and cutting labels out of clothes.

Auditory Seeking



Does not respond to name being called (distracted by other sounds in the classroom)
Make noises (appears unaware) e.g. bangs, taps, bangs objects to make sounds
Asks for instructions to be repeated
Loves loud equipment (TV, radio)
Stands close to interactive screen or TV (might put their ear to the speaker)

Tips to support an auditory seeking child:

Provide opportunities for noise-making .
Include music throughout the day
Try falling asleep to music or a story

Auditory Avoiding



Dislikes loud noises (such as the school bell)
Easily distracted by sounds (sometimes not noticeable to others)
Strong dislike of loud unexpected noises (fire alarm)
Covers ears to avoid noise
Seems oblivious to certain sounds
Prefers a quiet environment - may ask others to stop talking
Avoids certain areas of the school that are often loud (dining hall)

Tips to support an auditory avoiding child:

Reduce background noise where possible .
Give warnings before loud or unexpected noises.
Offer options like ear defenders or quiet spaces when things feel overwhelming.

Olfactory Seeking

- Smells items and objects before engaging in a task
- Doesn't notice strong odours (that most people would complain about)
- May smell objects and walls when entering a room
- Smells food before tasting it
- Seems oblivious to certain smells

Tips to support an olfactory seeking child:

- Provide safe opportunities to explore different smells
- Give them their favorite smell in a hanky for school
- Spray their clothes and pillows with scents.

Olfactory Avoiding

- Reacts to slight smells that don't appear to bother others
- Complains that their friends smell e.g. will say your breath smells to others
- Certain smells can cause them to feel or be sick
- Avoids certain smells (such as perfume)
- May avoid key areas in school (such as the dining hall)

Tips to support an olfactory avoiding child:

- Be mindful of strong smells (e.g. perfumes, cleaning products, cooking smells) and reduce where possible.
- Allow your child to move away from smells they find overwhelming.

Gustatory Seeking

- Bites or sucks their fingers or thumb
- Chews inedible objects and equipment such as school pencils, rubbers etc
- Prefers foods with lots of flavours
- Chews on clothing such as their jumper sleeve or shirt collar
- Tastes non-food items such as paint, glue etc
- Drools or dribbles excessively
- May bite others

Tips to support a gustatory (taste) seeking child:

- Offer a variety of strong flavours and textures (e.g. crunchy, spicy, sour).
- Provide safe opportunities for oral input (e.g. chewy foods, chewable tools).
- Let your child explore new tastes gradually.

Gustatory Avoiding

- Refuses to eat textured foods or foods with a lot of flavour
- Dislikes brushing their teeth
- Prefers to eat bland food
- Will eat the same food repeatedly
- Resistant to trying new food - may cause them to gag
- Avoids hot foods
- Avoids cold foods

Tips to support a gustatory (taste) avoiding child:

- Respect food preferences and avoid forcing new tastes.
- Introduce new foods slowly alongside familiar favourites.
- Focus on small steps (e.g. touching, smelling, or licking foods before eating).

Proprioceptive Seeking



Enjoys physical activities that involve jumping and crashing
Walks heavily (stomps feet)
Enjoys rough play or play fighting
Refuses or dislikes swings, slides and other playground equipment
Enjoys bear hugs and other deep pressure exercises e.g. holding hands
Likes small/tight spaces and clothing

Tips to support a proprioceptive seeking child:

Provide plenty of “heavy work” activities (e.g. pushing, pulling, carrying, climbing).
Use activities that involve deep pressure (e.g. weighted items, tight hugs if welcomed).
Build movement breaks into the day to help regulate their body.

Proprioceptive Avoiding



Dislikes busy environments and crowded areas such as the dining hall or main corridor
Avoids standing close to others
Has a limited awareness of personal space
Dislikes tight clothing
Overly sensitive to touch
Can appear lazy or lethargic

Tips to support a proprioceptive avoiding child:

Introduce movement and pressure activities gradually and gently.
Offer control and choice so your child can stop when it feels too much.
Use calm, predictable activities that support body awareness without overwhelming them.

Vestibular Seeking



Constantly moving (not able to stay still)
Spins or perform other fast movements (doesn't appear to become dizzy)
Climbs on furniture and other equipment
Constantly running, skipping, hopping instead of walking around the classroom
Rocks on their chair/floor
Balances their school chair on rear (or front) legs

Tips to support a vestibular seeking child:

Provide lots of movement opportunities (e.g. swinging, spinning, jumping).
Build regular movement breaks into the day.
Offer safe ways to explore movement (e.g. playgrounds, soft play, balance activities)

Vestibular Avoiding



Avoids play equipment that cause feet to leave the ground
Dislikes activities that cause them to be upside down
Avoids play equipment that involves high movement e.g. slides, swings
Moves slowly around the school building
Dislikes going up and down stairs (will hold the rail tightly)
Easily loses their balance (may appear clumsy)
Dislikes heights (even the smallest height)

Tips to support a vestibular avoiding child:

Introduce movement slowly and in small amounts.
Keep activities predictable and at ground level where possible.
Offer reassurance and allow your child to stop or take breaks when needed.

Internal/ Interoception

Finds it difficult to regulate their emotions impulsive
May not recognise when they are feeling hot, cold, hungry or full
Quick to change moods
Finds transitions times during school challenging
Finds it difficult to identify and understand emotions including fear, anger, jealousy
Poor sleep routine - will need lots of support to fall asleep at night

Tips to support interoception (body awareness):

Help your child notice body signals (e.g. hungry, tired, hot, needing the toilet).
Use regular check-ins during the day (“How does your body feel right now?”).
Build routines that support awareness of body needs (food, movement, rest breaks).