

What is Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)?



FOSTER
VILLAGE

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) is a "difficulty in the way the brain takes in, organizes and uses sensory information, causing a person to have problems interacting effectively in the everyday environment. Sensory stimulation may cause difficulty in one's movement, emotions, attention, relationships, or adaptive responses" -*The Out-of-Sync Child* by Carol Stock Kranowitz, M.A.

Did you know?

5% of kids experience SPD, with an estimated **80%** of kids with traumatic backgrounds experiencing it

SPD often goes undiagnosed due to its symptoms being mistaken for other conditions, such as ADHD

Symptoms of SPD

SPD has many different varieties (not included here: Sensory Discrimination Disorder and Sensory-Based Motor Disorder) and can manifest in different ways in each child. Here are just a few examples of behaviors a child experiencing SPD may show:

If a child is overresponsive they may:

- Avoid touch/react negatively to certain touch
- Reacts negatively (think fight or flight) to being dirty, certain textures, and certain foods
- Avoid moving or being moved
- Be afraid of falling
- May be stiff and avoid certain playground activities
- Overreact to bright light
- Have poor eye contact
- Cover ears to avoid sounds

If a child is underresponsive they may:

- Not know when they are touched
- Often drop toys and lack drive to play with them
- Not notice or react to being moved
- Be poor at protecting self from falling
- Be able to swing for a long time without getting dizzy
- Become more alert after pushing/pulling heavy things
- Ignore obstacles in path
- Ignore ordinary sounds
- Be able to eat very spicy foods

If a child is sensory-craving they may:

- Feel through toys without purpose
- Chew on things like shirt cuffs
- Feel walls and bump into people
- Move/fidget constantly
- Seek fast/spinning movement
- Get upside-down often
- Crave bear hugs/being squeezed
- Seek highly stimulating screens for long periods of time
- Be attracted to bright, flickering light such as strobe lights
- Seek strong odors
- Love loud noises/noisy spaces

REMEMBER:

SPD is very complex- for an official diagnosis and treatment, the professional opinion of a professional such as an Occupational Therapist (OT) is needed. These are just a few possible symptoms of SPD.