

SCHOOL SENSORY MODULATION “RED FLAGS” CHECKLIST



Student: _____ Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Observe the child 2-3 times in different settings, with these items in mind over the course of a week. Rate the frequency of these behaviors- N never, S sometimes, F frequently. Add additional comments or observations in the blank areas or on the back.

Remember that it is normal for all people to be sensitive to certain sensations. Sensory modulation becomes a disorder only when it negatively impacts a person’s life (i.e. ability to pay attention, learn, socialize, relax).

TOUCH:

Over-Responsive	Under-Responsive	Seeking
___ avoids expression of affection by teacher or peers/dislikes being touched	___ fails to notice food on face/need for tissue	___ excessive touching of objects and people
___ overreacts to minor cuts, scrapes	___ does not take notice of scapes or bumps	___ chews on shirt sleeve, collar, or pencil
___ dislikes touching glue, paint, stickers, tape or objects that are wet and/or dirty	___ struggles with fine motor tasks	___ tends to use the mouth, not the hands, to learn about toys and other objects
___ difficulty tolerating close one-on-one instruction	___ unintentionally rough with peers during play	Notes:
___ outbursts during lining up, walking in a line, or group lesson	___ drools	
___ limited food preferences, avoids textures	___ stuffs too much food in mouth when eating	
___ appears agitated when touched		
___ can react aggressively to touch by others		

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VESTIBULAR (Balance and movement sense):

Over-Responsive	Under-Responsive	Seeking
___ distractible and easily loses visual attention, especially if the head is moved (ie when visual focus shifts)	___ always moving	___ needs to take frequent movement breaks
___ difficulty with visual tracking; easily loses place (e.g. spooning work, rolling mat evenly)	___ poor sitting balance in chairs and on floor and balance while changing the body’s position	___ uses a self-stimulatory behavior with the head in order to maintain attention (e.g. head rocking)
___ dislikes the car/bus ride, frequently gets carsick	___ takes unnecessary risks on the playground and in the gym (poor safety awareness)	Notes:
___ fear and avoidance of the playground, gym and stairs	___ W sits	
___ does not like to move/chooses sedentary activities	___ seems floppy/ has low muscle tone	

PROPRIOCEPTION (Joint and muscle sense): Since proprioceptive input is always helpful, we do not have an Overresponsive section.

- ___ difficulty staying in one place; likes to take frequent movement breaks
- ___ stabilizes self against the furniture; for example, can “hook” arm around the chair to stay upright
- ___ “locks” joints to maintain posture
- ___ seems to prop the body up with arms
- ___ weak grasp, hands get tired when writing, writing hard on paper
- ___ frequently drops books, pencils, tools, dishcloth, chalk, etc...
- ___ tires easily, seen by lying on floor, difficulty making choice for next work, lying on table
- ___ uses self stimulatory behavior (repetitive toe tapping, rocking, throat clears, pacing, flapping) to maintain attention or relieve stress

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VISUAL:

Over-Responsive	Under-Responsive	Seeking
___ dislikes visually busy environments	___ difficulty with eye-hand coordination tasks (catching ball, tracing, writing)	___ seeks out and engages with shiny objects or objects that spin
___ bothered by bright lights, covers eyes, squints	___ difficulty with visual tracking, may lose place when reading	___ finger flicking in front of or in periphery of visual field
___ avoids eye contact	___ difficulty finding objects against a cluttered background	___ may look intently at people/objects
___ squints, rubs eyes	___ may get lost easily	Notes:
___ noticeable response/behaviors when walking from light to dark/dark to light	___ difficulty with number rods, putting map puzzles together and challenges with metal insets or geometric shapes	

AUDITORY:

Over-Responsive	Under-Responsive	Seeking
___ covers ears frequently or cries with loud or unexpected sounds	___ doesn't respond when name is called (no hearing deficit)	___ talks or makes noises constantly
___ easily distracted by background noise	___ says “what?” frequently even though hearing is fine	___ may speak in a loud voice to screen out incoming noise
___ distracted by noise; intolerance of background noise	___ frequently needs instructions repeated	Notes:
___ very sensitive to noises from other sources (eg the next classroom)	___ trouble learning to read	

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SMELL/TASTE:

Over-Responsive	Under-Responsive	Seeking
___ very sensitive to food smells, refuses to eat things that smell fine to you	___ likes strong odors such as perfume, cleaning products, gasoline	___ excessive need to smell items/people
___ notices smells others don't notice	___ likes highly spiced foods	___ licks inanimate objects, may try to chew or eat
___ plugs nose, avoids places with strong smells	___ may seem to disregard personal space of others (trying to smell people)	___ may seem to disregard personal space of others (trying to smell people)

INTEROCEPTION:

Over-Responsive	Under-Responsive
___ overreacts to small injuries	___ disregards small injuries
___ complains frequently of aches and pains	___ fails to recognize internal sensations (e.g. need to go to bathroom, need to eat, need to put on a sweater)
___ expresses severe distress about cold or hot weather	___ does not recognize the emotions of others
	___ has a hard time recognizing and expressing emotions

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

This checklist is based on information from:

Sensational Brain - Creators of Brain Works Products, www.sensationalbrain.com and Yack, E., Aquilla, P. & Sutton, S. (2002). *Building Bridges Through Sensory Integration* (2nd ed.). Las Vegas, NV: Sensory Resources, LLC.