

Sensory Accommodations in the Classroom

Sense	Associated Classroom Difficulties	Environmental Accommodations
1. Proprioceptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Child has difficulty with activities involving both sides of the body and/or stays to the edges during playground time. *Child has difficulty learning new movements, peddling a tricycle, or mainly engages in running or throwing during free play opportunities. *Child seems unaware of where other children or objects are, for example crashing into people, tripping over a rug, or bumping into bookshelves or tables frequently. *Child recovers very quickly when hurt, or doesn't seem to notice injuries *Child is easily upset by minor injuries (bumps, cuts, scrapes) *Child slouches or sprawls in chair or during circle time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *This sense is our “master switch”. You can use it to help regulate children for hypersensitive or hyposensitive behaviors. When in doubt, provide proprioceptive activities (heavy input into muscles and joints). *Provide equipment and ample free play that encourages and allows children to: move heavy items (phone books wrapped in duct tape), jump and crash, hang from one or both arms (monkey bars), climb, hop, push, rough and tumble play with peers, throw, rip, build, rake, scrub (tables or mats), squeeze (play doh, spray bottles to water plants), crawl, and run!
2. Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Child starts to “rev up” in a busy or cluttered environment *Child colors only on half of the page or leaves pencil and paper work blank, even if they know the answer *Child has difficulty following along 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provide access to a small space free from posters, toys, or other visual clutter. *Dim the lights, or allow only sunlight to come in through the windows.
3. Tactile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Child avoids or seeks out interactions where they will come in physical contact with peer (playground, standing in line) * Child doesn't notice when hands or face are dirty *Child wants to use a tool (spoon/ brush) during messy tasks; always seeking to wipe or clean hands *Child always wants to touch objects, surfaces, people or textures * Child constantly wants something in his or her hand, fidgets with loose objects, or plays with crayons rather than coloring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Provide a variety of sensory touch experiences within the classroom. Allow children to explore at their own pace, children tolerate more with self directed exploration. *Provide paper towels or wipe for cleaning hands as often as the child wants, especially if it allows him to engage in the activity for a longer period of time. *Allow tool use to interact with an undesired texture such as a paintbrush, a spoon or fork, or a stick.

4. Auditory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Misses verbal directions more than peers *Struggles in bathrooms when the toilet flushes or hand dryer is activated *Strong reactions to fire drill/ door slam/ bells, etc. *Child hums, sings, or talks to self during quiet time *Revs up within a noisy environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Go outside when it is available- natural environments (sand, grass, trees) absorb sound. *Rugs, blankets, or stuffed animals can help absorb sound indoors. *Whisper directions or conversations and children will naturally bring volume down to match yours. *Be aware of classroom volume and provide quieter moments or spaces as necessary.
5. Vestibular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Child is always on the go. *Child spins in circles but never gets dizzy *Child has strong reactions to going down stairs, moving backwards, or playing on a swing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *A preschooler's attention span ranges from 5-10 minutes depending on his/her level of interest in the task. For optimal learning allow an equal number of minutes of movement to minutes of learning. Even better is to build movement into learning opportunities. *Allow for movement breaks throughout the day that changes the position of the head (for example bend at waist with head upside down to look through legs, log rolls, tip head to look backwards, etc.)
6. Olfactory & Gustatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Child has strong reactions to smells, refuses to go into bathroom *Child is a picky eater during snack *Child over-stuffs mouth during snack *Child seeks out strong flavors (sour, minty, sweet) *Child chews on shirt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Never force a child to take a bite of anything. Interacting and playing with food is an important step towards chewing and swallowing it. *Model how to interact with a snack while eating it “This has a big smell, this is cold!, mine has three different colors, this makes a big crunch when I bite it” *Provide opportunities to drink water through a straw.