

## **Sensory Preferences Affecting Everyday Activities:**

This area will be helpful for all ages.

Sensory preferences are the choices that children make about the sensations that they like and dislike.

We all have sensory preferences that help us to function in daily activities optimally, eg some people like it quiet to work and some like the radio on in the background. Neither is right or wrong, it is just different.

Some children have very obvious choices and strong needs for some sensory choices and if these needs are not met, it really affects their daily activities in a negative way. We try to help them to get these sensory preferences met, in a safe and age appropriate way.

It is also helpful to know that getting these preferences met little and often, can help a child stay well regulated. When a child is well regulated, they can play and learn. Which supports their wellbeing.

Their choices of activity and behavioural responses to sensory cues around them, tell us what they need to develop and grow.

How do they show us their choices? We watch their behaviour and we think, what does this tell us about the sensory preferences that they have?

Sometimes children are very sensitive to some sensations and do not like them and sometimes they needs lots of a particular sensation.

Here are some things to think about when you watch your child. See you child with sensory 'eyes':

Do they love lots of movement, eg running around, turning in circles, turning themselves upside down to do roly polys?

Do they dislike movement, eg are easily car sick, like to sit still?

Do they like to jump, bounce, are heavy handed or heavy footed?

Do they like to make noise or put music or TV on very loud?

Do they cover their ears when there is noise?

Do they dislike the feel of their clothes, or haircuts?

Do they like the room to be dark, close the curtain, turn the lights off?

Do they dislike strong smells, or seek out strong smells?

Do they dislike strong tastes or seek out strong flavours?

Whatever their preference is, let them have it, in a safe and age appropriate way, little and often and see if they are calmer and more settled afterwards. If they are, keep doing this, it is what they need.

When you help your child to get these needs met, they will then be more ready to engage in the other daily activities which they need to do or would like to do eg getting washed and dressed, brushing teeth.

If you would like to learn more about this, you may find the links below useful:

[locala.org.uk/services/sensory-occupational-therapy-service/information-for-parents](https://locala.org.uk/services/sensory-occupational-therapy-service/information-for-parents)

[locala.org.uk/services/sensory-occupational-therapy-service/talking-sense-training](https://locala.org.uk/services/sensory-occupational-therapy-service/talking-sense-training)

<https://www.sensoryintegrationeducation.com/collections> This link provides online learning for parents and school.

More Information for home and school coming soon.