

*Some General Classroom Suggestions**

made available by:

<http://mhsgic.org/DSQIC/edocs/si/si6.htm>

Begin the year with a classroom with every little decorations on the wall and ceilings. Put up materials slowly and one at a time. Add decorations with each unit and have the children help put the materials up. Use natural times in the curriculum to take materials down and send home, such as for conference days and holiday breaks.

* Have an area in the room where children can go to get away from the stimulation, such as a house, tent, fort, etc.

* For children who have difficulty with touch, put that child last in line to avoid touching from both sides, or pushing from the back.

* Be cautious when using multisensory teaching techniques (such as gluing sand or glitter) with some children. Approach these types of activities slowly and playfully.

* Incorporate movement breaks throughout the day.

Specific Ways To Deal with Sensory Difficulties in the Preschool Classroom

As discussed earlier by Dunn, children respond differently to stimulation based on their threshold for stimulation. Children with a high threshold may be:

- constantly moving,
- hitting or biting other children, or
- may appear disorganized, anxious or frightened

Children with a low threshold may be:

- slow to respond,
- hard to motivate,
- afraid to try new things, or
- appear "lethargic."

Here are some suggestions of things to do:

Problem Area

Common Parent/Teacher Observations Home/Classroom Accommodations

Tactile

Children with a low threshold for tactile stimulation might:

- Have a strong reaction to the unexpected touch or the light touch
- Be a picky eater, eat only a few foods, or not like to mix foods
- Be picky about clothes, may take clothes off, or resist being dressed
- Tell child before touching
- Sit child so other children don't brush against him
- Before tooth brushing, apply deep pressure around mouth with washcloth
- Brush teeth before meal (to relax the child's sensitivity)
- Use all cotton clothing, wash new clothes several times before wearing, use seamless socks

Tactile

Children with a high threshold for tactile stimulation might:

- Be a messy eater, have food all over face, or stuff mouth full of food
- Play "roughly"
- Brush teeth before meal (to pep up the child's oral sensitivities)
- Provide more stimulation, such as squeeze balls, rubbing with towel or other textures
- Provide lots of opportunities for sensory play such as finger painting

Olfactory /Gustatory

Children with a low threshold for olfactory or gustatory stimulation might:

- Strong reaction to smells, perfumes, air fresheners
- Avoid certain types of food or certain textures
- Try to reduce the number of conflicting smells in the room, such as perfumes
- Tell child strong tastes are coming

Olfactory /Gustatory

Children with a high threshold for olfactory or gustatory stimulation might have:

- Decreased ability to taste or recognize different smells
- Difficulty with articulation
- Give the child strong smells and tastes to experience
- Try giving child strong tastes, such as sour, bitter, spicy
- Use cold temperatures

Visual

Children with a high low threshold for visual stimulation might:

- Close eyes or cover eyes frequently
- Squint
- Have difficulty with figure ground activities
- Minimize the number of distractions; decrease clutter on walls and ceilings
- Create quiet area of the room where child can go when overwhelmed
- Avoid bright lights

Visual

Children with a high threshold for visual stimulation might:

- Avoid coloring, puzzles, stacking blocks
- May not recognize shapes or colors
- Put toys on blank table top or white paper to increase contrast
- Use brightly colored materials

Auditory

Children with a high threshold for auditory stimulation might have:

- Strong reaction to fire alarms, PA announcements, toilet flushing, noise outside classroom
- Difficulty distinguishing what teacher is saying from outside noise
- Warn child before loud noise
- Place child in quiet area of classroom

Auditory

Children with a high threshold for auditory stimulation might:

- Frequently asks what teacher said
- Use short, simple directions

Vestibular

Children with a high threshold for vestibular movement might:

- Swing and swing and never stop
- Be moving and rocking all the time
- Allow child to stand at table while working
- Provide lots of opportunities for movement
- Provide recess

Vestibular

Children with a low threshold for vestibular activities might:

- Fear being picked up or tipped back
- Be very sedentary
- Not like to climb, swim, or be off the ground
- Gets carsick from movement
- Avoid quick movements or sudden changes in position
- Open windows of car, position in middle of back seat

Proprioception

Children with a low threshold for proprioceptive activities might:

- Look clumsy
- May hang onto teacher, walk into you
- Provide activities for pouring materials such as beans, rice, etc.
- Play catch with a big ball or pillow
- Give the child lots of bear hugs

Proprioception

Children with a high threshold for proprioceptive activities might:

- Presses really hard when writing or coloring
- Chews on shirts
- Have child carry something heavy, such as books, laundry bag
- Have child press against wall or push chair across room
- Give child something to chew on

The information in this table has been taken from:

Dunn, W. (1999). *The sensory profile*. Tucson, AZ: Therapy Skills Builders. Inamura, K.N. (1998). *SI for early intervention: A team approach*. Tucson, AZ: Therapy Skills Builders.

Kranowitz, C.S. (1998). *The out-of-sync child: Recognizing and coping with sensory integration dysfunction*. New York: Berkley Publishing Co. Miller, H., & Heaphy, T. (1998).

Sensory process in preschool children. Volume 3 of AOTA's Self-Study Series: Making a Difference in School System Practice : A Self-Paced Clinical Course. Bethesda, MD: American Occupational Therapy Association.

Williams, M.S., & Shelenberger, S. (1996). "How does your engine run?" A leader's guide to the alert program for self-regulation. Albuquerque, NM: Therapy Works.

Sensory Processing Resources

Books

- **SenseAbilities (Maryann Colby Trott)**
- **Sensory Integration (Michael C. Abraham)**
- **The Out-of-Sync Child (Carol Stock Kranowitz)**
- **Is It Sensory or Is It Behavior? (Carolyn Murray-Slutsky and by Betty A Paris)**
- **The Out-of-Sync Child : Recognizing and Coping With Sensory Integration Dysfunction (Carol Stock Kranowitz)**
- **The Out-Of-Sync Child Has Fun: Activities for Kids With Sensory Integration Dysfunction (Carol Stock Kranowitz)**
- **Parenting a Child with Sensory Processing Disorder (Christopher Auer and Susan Blumberg)**
- **Understanding Sensory Dysfunction: Learning, Development And Sensory Dysfunction In Autism Spectrum Disorders ADHD, Learning Disabilities and Bipolar Disorder (Polly Godwin Emmons, Liz McKendry Anderson)**
- **Raising a Sensory Smart Child: The Definitive Handbook for Helping Your Child with Sensory Integration Issues (Lindsey Biel, Nancy Peske)**
- **Building Bridges through Sensory Integration (Ellen Yack, Paula Aquilla, Shirley Sutton)**
- **Sensory Secrets: How to Jump-Start Learning in Children (by Catherine Schneider)**
- **Answers to Questions Teachers Ask About Sensory Integration (Carol Stock Kranowitz, Deanna Iris Sava, Elizabeth Haber, Lynn Balzer-Martin, Stacey Szklut)**
- **101 Activities for Kids in Tight Spaces : At the Doctor's Office, on Car, Train, and Plane Trips, Home Sick in Bed . . (Carol S. Kranowitz)**
- **Too Loud, Too Bright, Too Fast, Too Tight: What to Do If You Are Sensory Defensive in an Overstimulating World (Sharon Heller)**

Websites

- **<http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/functional.html>**
- **SPD Network:-**
<http://www.sinetwork.org/aboutspd/defining.html>
“...a researcher and pioneer of this field, coined the term Sensory Integration Dysfunction. Jean Ayers used the term throughout her professional career (1954-1988) to describe atypical social, emotional, motor, and functional patterns of behavior that were related to poor processing of sensory stimuli.”
- **KID POWER:-**

<http://www.kid-power.org/sid.html>

Making Sense of Sensory Integration: Introduction to SI

[http://sinetwork.org/about spd](http://sinetwork.org/about_spd)

<http://specialchildren.about.com/od/sensoryintegration/>

<http://specialchildren.about.com/od/sensoryintegration/>