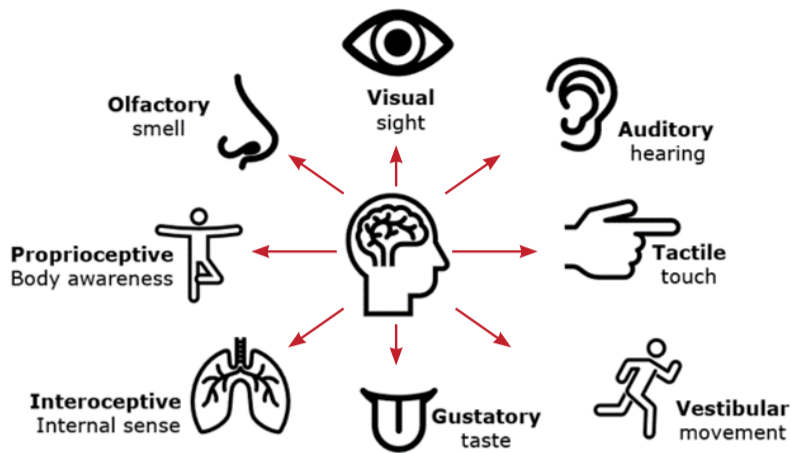


Understanding Children's Sensory Preferences

What can educators do?

Contact us for more information:
Talk with your Inclusion Professional
P: 1800 811 035
www.inclusionsupportqld.org.au



What are the sensory systems and why are they important?

Children learn about their bodies and the world around them through the sensory systems. Children need sensory input from their sensory systems to lay the foundation for all other learning. The Central Nervous System processes, organises and interprets all the sensory information before planning a response.

Children that display sensory over-responsivity, under-responsivity or sensory-seeking responses have difficulty functioning effectively. Everybody has unique sensory needs and preferences.



Sensory Play

Educators can tailor their program to meet the needs of all children through planning sensory play experiences throughout the day to support children to maintain the appropriate state of arousal. It is important to consult with families and therapists as the experience could be calming for one child and alerting for another. Some examples could include:

Tactile play:

- ▶ Playdough, mud, clay, water, sand
- ▶ Tactile boards and bags
- ▶ Gear, puzzles, locks and latches
- ▶ Explore different textures

Vestibular play:

- ▶ Swinging, spinning, rocking
- ▶ Walking, running, jumping
- ▶ Climbing, hanging upside down
- ▶ Roughhousing, wrestling

Proprioceptive play:

- ▶ Playing tug of war
- ▶ Pulling, pushing heavy objects
- ▶ Wheelbarrow walking, crawling, yoga
- ▶ Catching, throwing, kicking, batting balls

Gustatory and Olfactory play:

- ▶ Cooking and tasting sweet, savoury, salty, sour and bitter
- ▶ Growing, harvesting and tasting herbs, vegetables and fruits
- ▶ Using oil burners and scented pens

Let's reflect on Reasonable Adjustments

- ▶ How could you create quiet spaces for children to access before they feel overwhelmed?
- ▶ Could sensory toys or alternative seating options support children to feel calm and focused?
- ▶ What support could be provided to children if noise levels are too much?
- ▶ How could you change your physical environment and routine to minimise large groups of children playing and transitioning together?
- ▶ Do children engage in regular movement breaks? What could this look like?
- ▶ What opportunities for sensory play do you provide for children?
- ▶ Have you accessed a sensory aid loan from the Specialist Equipment Library?

