**ASC Sensory Checklist**

This sensory checklist and strategies has been devised for the use of Schools and Families Specialist Services Staff. It has not been written by qualified Occupational Therapists but by staff with experience of working with children with autism and associated sensory needs.

By ticking the checklists you should be able to see if a child is over or under sensitive within each sense. Be aware that children can move from over to under sensitive within each sense on a daily or hourly basis, but being able to recognise this and to use appropriate strategies will help us to support the child who may not yet be able to self –regulate.

We have referred to the following books during this process:

* National Autistic Society - Sensory Strategies: Practical ways to help children and young people with autism learn and achieve by Corinna Laurie
* The Autism Discussion Page on the Core Challenges of Autism by Bill Nason
* The Out-of-Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Processing Disorder by Carol Stock Kranowitz
* The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun: Activities for Kids with Sensory Processing Disorder by Carol Stock Kranowitz
* Building Bridges Through Sensory Integration by Ellen Yack, Paula Aquilla and Shirley Sutton

Visual Checklist

Hyper

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Is very sensitive to bright lights and sunlight |  |
| May be sensitive to certain colours |  |
| Has very fine vision, seeing particles in the air |  |
| Direct vision may be too overwhelming for the child |  |
| May squint, or look with peripheral vision |  |
| Prefers the dark |  |
| Blinks often |  |
| Doesn't like looking at the print in books |  |
| Turns lights down low |  |
| Be uncomfortable or overwhelmed by moving objects or people |  |
| Withdraws from classroom participation and avoid group activities in which movement is required |  |
| Becomes overwhelmed with strong visual changes |  |

Hypo

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Is very attracted to visual stimulation, often stares at light |  |
| Seeks out intense visual stimulation |  |
| Loves turning light on and off |  |
| Loves mirrors, shiny objects, reflecting surfaces |  |
| Stares at spinning objects for prolonged periods |  |
| Likes game shows with printed questions on the screen |  |
| Likes lining things up |  |
| Likes watching moving objects (such as fans, revolving doors) |  |
| Likes to look at his toys while lying on the ground or from unusual angles |  |
| Watching repetitive movements (e.g. book pages turning, opening and closing doors, fingers moving in front of face) |  |
| Looking at things out of the corner of eyes |  |
| Presses eyes with hands, usually at the corners |  |

Auditory Checklist

Hyper

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Is sensitive to loud noises |  |
| Can hear frequencies others cannot hear |  |
| Covers ears with hands or cries and runs away |  |
| Is distracted by background noises - e.g. humming lights, fridges, fans, heaters, ticking clocks, noises outside |  |
| Fearful of sound of hand dryers, flushing toilets, vacuum cleaners, hairdryers, squeaky shoes, babies crying, dogs barking - may make them avoid places where they're likely to hear them |  |
| Frequently asks peoples to be quiet or stop making a noise - e.g. singing |  |
| Complains of people yelling when they aren't |  |
| Can't cope with more than one person talking at the same time |  |
| Hum or sing to themselves or make repetitive noise to block out unwanted noise. Humming is perceived to be "safe" as they have total control over it |  |
| Refuse to go into loud, echoey environments such as swimming pools, school halls, shopping centres |  |
| May appear to dislike someone with a certain tone or volume of voice |  |

Hypo

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Speaks loudly |  |
| Is a noisy person |  |
| Turns volume up loud |  |
| Hums or makes vocal noises constantly |  |
| Loves items or activities that have distinct sounds (motors, pounding etc.) may not respond to verbal prompts or to their name being called |  |
| Seems to have difficulty understanding or remembering what was said |  |
| Often talks to themselves through a task aloud, not realising it may distract others |  |
| May not acknowledge particular sounds |  |

Smell and Taste Checklist

Hyper

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Finds many common tastes and smells repulsive |  |
| Can be overwhelmed very easily by normal daily scents (perfume, food, cleaning materials, hand cream, shampoo, shoe polish) |  |
| May refuse to eat certain foods because of the smell |  |
| Refuse to eat in certain rooms because of the way it smells (e.g. refusal to sit on carpet as it smells of spilt milk) |  |
| May gag or vomit easily |  |
| Can be very picky eater |  |
| May be distressed by household or cooking smells |  |
| Refuse to go to someone's house due to the way it smells |  |
| Base friendships on way a person smells |  |
| Be seen breathing through mouth rather than nose |  |
| Reluctant to use any public/school toilets |  |
| Only eats bland foods |  |
| Certain textures may cause discomfort so prefers smooth foods |  |

Hypo

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Needs to taste or smell everything - including people |  |
| May not notice odours others complain about - e.g. manure in fields |  |
| Actively seeks strong odours such as urine or faeces |  |
| Put inappropriate objects in mouth, lick things or smell others' hair |  |
| Preference for strong flavours, spice, food |  |
| Eats everything - e.g. grass, soil, materials (this is known as PICA) |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Vestibular Checklist

The vestibular sense provides us with a sense of balance. It detects movement from receptors located within our inner ears. This sense influences all of our other sensory systems.

Movement can have a stimulating and/or calming effect on our body.

Hyper (shows intolerance or reluctance to movement) so may:-

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dislike swinging, spinning and sliding |  |
| Be cautious, slow moving and hesitant in taking risks |  |
| Be fearful of heights and slightly raised surfaces |  |
| May avoid jumping off a bottom step or walking on a kerb |  |
| Become anxious when feet leave the ground |  |
| Be fearful of going up and down stairs |  |
| Feel threatened when head is upside down or tilted - e.g. when having hair shampooed |  |
| Be fearful when an adult slides the chair a child is sitting on closer to theirs or closer to the table/desk |  |
| Suffer from motion sickness - e.g. be car sick or dislike lifts, escalators, fairground rides |  |

Hypo (shows increased tolerance to movement and tends to seek it out)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Needs to keep moving as much as possible in order to function |  |
| May have trouble sitting still |  |
| Shakes head, rocks back and forth, jumps up and down repeatedly |  |
| Crave intense movement experiences - e.g. bouncing on furniture, using rocking chair, turning in a swivel chair, assuming upside down positions |  |
| Be a thrill seeker - enjoys fast moving or spinning park/ playground equipment or fairground rides |  |
| Does not get dizzy after twirling in circles or spinning rapidly for some time |  |
| Enjoys swinging very high |  |
| Likes see-saws or trampolines or rocking equipment |  |

Proprioceptive Checklist

The proprioceptive sense allows us to know where our body is in space without having to look at it - i.e. body awareness. Proprioception is the resistance within muscles and joints. This organises the nervous system and can be used either to calm or alert us to an optimum level of functioning.

Children with poor proprioception may exhibit the following behaviours:-

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Lean on or bump into objects or people |  |
| Trip over or crash into objects/people |  |
| Stamp feet while walking to feel where they are going |  |
| Kick heels against the floor or chair |  |
| Bang a stick or other object on a wall or fence |  |
| Touch walls as they walk or stay to the perimeter or edge of an activity or place (e.g. playground) |  |
| Presses, bangs or bites fingers, wrists and objects |  |
| Pulls, twists or chews objects |  |
| Likes clothing to be tight, and shoes to be fastened securely |  |
| Likes to be swaddled and/or wrapped in blankets, tucked in tightly at bedtime - this makes them feel safe |  |
| Likes to squeeze into tight spaces |  |
| Frequently break toys and equipment as they do not understand their own strength or how much force to use |  |
| May hurt other children - for similar reason as listed above |  |
| Have difficulty with tasks requiring fine manipulation skills |  |
| May pick an object up with more force than necessary, resulting in spillage or breakage |  |
| May use too much or too little pressure when writing or drawing |  |
| Grinds teeth or cracks joints |  |
| Seeks out rough and tumble play |  |
| May rock backwards and forwards or fidget continuously |  |
| Flaps hands, claps, jumps and hops |  |