**School setting**

**Sensory check lists – age 3 and above**

**Name: DOB:**

**School:**

**Date:**

**Person/s completing checklist:**

**Relationship to young person:**

The following check list is not a diagnostic tool. Rather, it is an indicator of sensory over or under-responsiveness to sensory input.

The purpose of the tool is to gather information related to a child’s or young person’s sensory differences.

**TERMS**

**Over Responsive**

This check list will use the term “Over Responsive” which can also be known as hypersensitive with a presenting behaviour of sensory avoider.

In general, the brain adjusts and sometimes ignores the tremendous amount of sensory input it received.

People who are “Over Responsive” register too much information from one or more of their senses. This can be very overwhelming, distracting and distressing. This can result in that person avoiding stimuli which are painful or over whelming.

Being over responsive in any of your senses can impact on social integration, communication, behaviour, social/emotional flexibility and learning.

**Under Responsive**

This check list uses the term “Under Responsive” which can also be known as hyposensitive with a presenting behaviour of being a sensory seeker.

When a person fails to respond or has a very slow response to stimuli they are said to be “Under Responsive”. People can seek intense sensory experiences in the areas they are under responsive to. Their seeking behaviour is aimed at stimulating their senses that are under responsive from a very low level of responsiveness or arousal.

**Vestibular**

Our **sense of balance** is called our vestibular sense. It helps us with keeping upright, balanced and optimal position for sitting, movement and keeping our eyes in the best position for good vision. You only really notice your vestibular sense when you have a problem with it. For example, if you have ever made yourself dizzy by spinning or if you have vertigo or an ear infection.

√√

Two ticks = A behaviour response which impacts significantly on daily functioning in a child’s life.

√

One tick = Behaviours may be observed but daily functioning is not impacted by it when compared to other reactions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Vestibular Under Responsiveness** | **√** | **√√** |
| Finds it difficult to sit still, fidgeting, rocking, swinging in chair.  In constant motion |  |  |
| Craves intense movement or spinning (does not get dizzy) |  |  |
| Slouches, slumps, sprawls in chair |  |  |
| Loses attention when seated for prolonged periods of time, compared with his peers |  |  |
| Seems to find endless reasons to approach the teacher |  |  |
| Prefers running, jumping and hopping to walking |  |  |
| Frequently leaves chair to walk/run around the classroom |  |  |
| Has difficulty coordinating both hands together e.g. scissors, opening packets, holding paper to stabilise whilst writing |  |  |
| **Vestibular Over Responsiveness** | √ | √√ |
| Seems fearful of movement. Refuses to participate in PE and playground games |  |  |
| W sits on the floor, wraps legs around chair |  |  |
| Avoids/dislikes PE apparatus, such as, wall bars, balance beam, gym horse, climbing, balancing |  |  |
| Only engages in sedentary activities |  |  |
| Distracted and/or fearful when sitting on a chair/toilet which is too high (ie feet off the ground) |  |  |
| Regular episodes of motion sickness |  |  |
| Student complains of a headache and feeling sick after engaging in movement activities |  |  |
| Student in a wheelchair fearful when moved or tipped backwards |  |  |
| Dislikes head being upside down e.g. avoids bending down to put shoes on/picking objects up from the floor |  |  |
| Student dislikes being transferred in a hoist |  |  |

Describe in brief how difficulties in this area affect this child’s day to day functioning at school.

**Proprioceptive Sense**

This sense lets our bodies know where they are in relation to the environment around us and where your head, trunk, arms, legs, head etc. are in relation to each other. This helps us plan our movements, avoid bumping into objects, work out how much pressure or force we need to use when carrying out an activity due to the feedback our body receives through this sense.

√√

Two ticks = A behaviour response which impacts significantly on daily functioning in a child’s life.

√

One tick = Behaviours may be observed but daily functioning is not impacted by it when compared to other reactions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Proprioceptive Under Responsiveness** | **√** | **√√** |
| Likes bumping, crashing and jumping |  |  |
| Bumps into things, failing to notice objects in the way |  |  |
| Loves tight small spaces |  |  |
| Likes wrestling and squashing others, often hurting other unintentionally |  |  |
| Falls on the floor or crashes up the walls on purpose |  |  |
| Chews on many non -edible objects |  |  |
| Finds in difficult to apply the correct amount of pressure for tasks e.g. writing too light or too dark, gauging how to pour at the correct flow and amount. |  |  |
| Seems to apply too much force for everyday tasks, may slam doors |  |  |
| Appears floppy and often leans against people and furniture |  |  |
| Fidgets with objects excessively (pencils, notebooks etc) |  |  |
| Walks on tip toes at times |  |  |
| Stomps feet when walking |  |  |
| **“W” sits on the floor** or sits on knees in a chair or wraps legs around chair legs |  |  |

Describe in brief how difficulties in this area affect this child’s day to day functioning at school.

**Sense of Touch**

Sometimes referred to as the tactile sense.

√√

Two ticks = A behaviour response which impacts significantly on daily functioning in a child’s life.

√

One tick = Behaviours may be observed but daily functioning is not impacted by it when compared to other reactions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tactile Under Responsive/ Tactile Seeking** | **√** | **√√** |
| Has a need to touch everything and everyone |  |  |
| Has no reaction or delayed reaction to being touched or bumped unless it is really heavy |  |  |
| Fails to notice or not too worried by cuts and bumps |  |  |
| Leaves clothes twisted |  |  |
| Tends to grip pencil hard or uses too much pressure when writing |  |  |
| Does not seem to notice messy hands or face |  |  |
| May harm others unintentionally when playing |  |  |
| Explores objects with their mouths like much younger children would |  |  |
| Has little or delayed reaction to pain or temperature |  |  |
| **Tactile Over Responsiveness / Tactile Avoiding** | **√** | **√√** |
| Does not like being touched unexpectedly |  |  |
| Avoids or is fearful of standing close to other people |  |  |
| Needs to wipe hands quickly during messy tasks, or will avoid task |  |  |
| Easily upset by minor injuries (minor scratches and bumps) |  |  |
| Only uses fingertips to manipulate objects |  |  |
| Dislikes contact sports in playground and PE |  |  |
| Difficulty standing in line or sitting beside other students |  |  |
| Can become upset or aggressive to unexpected touch, especially light touch |  |  |
| Dislikes certain clothing, fabrics, eg, uniform, PE kit, labels etc |  |  |

Describe in brief how difficulties in this area affect this child’s day to day functioning at school.

**Sense of Sight**

Sometimes called our visual sense

√√

Two ticks = A behaviour response which impacts significantly on daily functioning in a child’s life.

√

One tick = Behaviours may be observed but daily functioning is not impacted by it when compared to other reactions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Vision Under Responsive** | **√** | **√√** |
| Misses written or demonstrated directions |  |  |
| Struggles to keep materials organised for use during the day |  |  |
| Leaves blanks on a busy worksheet, despite knowing the answers |  |  |
| Fascinated by reflections and brightly coloured objects |  |  |
| Difficulty writing – spaces between words, letter formation, size |  |  |
| Misses objects in competing (busy) backgrounds |  |  |
| Difficulty naming or matching shape, size |  |  |
| **Vision Over Responsive** | **√** | **√√** |
| Prefers a darker environment or asks for lights off in the classroom. |  |  |
| Looks down most of the time, especially outdoors / busy places |  |  |
| Squints, rubs eyes regularly |  |  |
| Finds reading difficult. Loses place – words “move” |  |  |
| Difficulty copying from the whiteboard – loses place |  |  |
| Easily distracted by other visual movements in the room |  |  |
| Complains of discomfort with fluorescent lighting/ bright light |  |  |

Describe in brief how difficulties in this area affect this child’s day to day functioning at school.

**Sense of Sound**

Sometimes known as our auditory sense

√√

Two ticks = A behaviour response which impacts significantly on daily functioning in a child’s life.

√

One tick = Behaviours may be observed but daily functioning is not impacted by it when compared to other reactions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Hearing Under Responsive** | **√** | **√√** |
| Misses verbal instructions |  |  |
| Tends to tune out or seem to not to hear what you say |  |  |
| Struggles to complete a task in a noisy setting |  |  |
| Makes noises to self (eg, humming) to keep focussed on task |  |  |
| Seems to have difficulty remembering or understanding what has been said |  |  |
| **Hearing Over Responsive** | **√** | **√√** |
| Covers ears of runs away from certain noises, such as, fire alarm, another student shouting, musical instrument |  |  |
| Can hear/ easily distracted by sounds other cannot hear, such as, humming of a light, ticking clock etc |  |  |
| Seems to ignore instructions or is slow to follow instructions |  |  |
| Asks people to be quiet, stop talking, singing etc. |  |  |
| Can cope with their own noise. Makes repetitive sounds to block out other sounds |  |  |
| Difficulty participating in group work, discussions, projects |  |  |
| Startles easily |  |  |
| Dislikes/avoids situations where there is a lot of noise, such as, playground, dining room, PE, assembly |  |  |
| Can perceive normal talking as shouting |  |  |

Describe in brief how difficulties in this area affect this child’s day to day functioning at school.

**Sense of Smell**

Also known as olfactory.

√√

Two ticks = A behaviour response which impacts significantly on daily functioning in a child’s life.

√

One tick = Behaviours may be observed but daily functioning is not impacted by it when compared to other reactions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Smell Under Responsive** | **√** | **√√** |
| Seek out smells (not always in an appropriate way) |  |  |
| Does not notice odours that other would complain about (may impact upon personal hygiene) |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Smell Over Responsive** | **√** | **√√** |
| Reacts to smells that do not bother others |  |  |
| Tells people how bad or funny they smell |  |  |
| Offended or nauseated by bathroom odours or personal hygiene smells |  |  |
| Upset by or avoids perfumes and colognes |  |  |
| Upset by or avoids household smells |  |  |
| May gag or vomit at a smell |  |  |
| Dislikes/upset by certain food smells eg, dining room |  |  |

Describe in brief how difficulties in this area affect this child’s day to day functioning at school.

**Checklist findings:**

The purpose of this sensory checklist is to help parents and school staff who interact with children become educated about particular signs of sensory processing difficulties.

It is **not** to be used as the absolute diagnostic criteria for labelling children with a sensory processing disorder, but rather as an educational tool and checklist for knowledge and guidance.

* What symptoms does the child present with?
* Which sensory systems are they having difficulty with?
* How much does it interfere with their (or others) daily life?
* What impact is it having on their level of functioning?

When looking at the checklist consider the “Five Caveats” that Carol Stock Kranowitz points out in her book *“The out of sync child”*

1. “Everyone has some sensory integration problems now and then, because no one is regulated all the time. All kinds of stimuli can temporarily disrupt normal functioning of the brain, either by overloading it with, or by depriving it, of sensory stimulation.” (*C. Kranowitz, The Out of Sync Child*)
2. “The child with sensory dysfunction does not necessarily exhibit every characteristic. For example, a child with vestibular dysfunction may have poor balance but good muscle tone.”
3. “Sometimes a child will show characteristics of a dysfunction one day but not the next. For example, a child may fall over every bump in the pavement on a Friday but then score every goal at football on the Saturday.”
4. “A child may be both hypersensitive and hyposensitive to stimuli. For example, a child may be extremely sensitive to light touch, but may be indifferent to the deep pain of an injection.”
5. “A child may exhibit characteristics of a particular sensory dysfunction, yet have no dysfunction. For example, a child who typically withdraws from touch, may have an emotional difficulty rather than a tactile sensitivity.”

**Quick glance at what the check list shows.**

Be mindful that some areas have more questions in them that others, therefore the degree of difficulty will be proportional to how many questions are asked in that section and the level to which sensory difficulties impact upon daily life.

In the table below record how many ticks you got in each section. A higher number of ticks can indicate a difficulty with specific sensory experiences in any of the areas being considered.

If you have recorded more difficulties in the √ column this may need less intervention that if a greater number of difficulties are highlighted in the √√ column.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sense | Under Responsive | | Over responsive | |
| √ | √√ | √ | √√ |
| Vestibular System  (Balance and coordination) |  |  |  |  |
| Proprioception  (Body awareness, motor planning) |  |  |  | |
| Tactile |  |  |  |  |
| Sight |  |  |  |  |
| Hearing |  |  |  |  |
| Smell |  |  |  |  |
| Taste |  |  |  |  |

The profile may show ticks in both under responsive and over responsive for the same sense, this can be common.

If this is the case, consider what behaviour you have observed and what this behaviour might be trying to achieve (avoiding, seeking, not registering, overload).

**SUMMARY**

|  |
| --- |
| What is indicated as an area(s) of difficulty? Circle Yes or No  Vestibular Y/N  Proprioception Y/N  Tactile Y/N  Visual Y/N  Auditory Y/N  Smell Y/N |

Adapted from Autism West Midlands UK Sensory Profile 2014