

21 Sensory Red Flags

Please use this list as a guide, NOT a diagnostic tool. While the list below does include some of the most overlooked and popular sensory red flags, it should not be used to determine if your child has any particular diagnosis. Instead, I encourage you to use this checklist to start to understand why your child may be displaying some of these behaviors that can often be confusing!

Keep in mind that the majority of these red flags could be indicative of other behavioral or physical challenges. You can feel more confident that sensory is a factor for your child IF you see a pattern of multiple behaviors or red flags in this list. However, all the red flags highlighted in blue tend to almost solely be a result of a child's sensory processing.

- 1. **Avoids movement** – (swinging, climbing, or any fast movements)
- 2. **Gagging at the immediate sight, taste, and smell of foods**
- 3. **Frequently walking on toes** – (several reasons kids do this, most common is sensory)
- 4. **Clumsy** – (a variety of reasons of clumsiness, consider this sensory if you see other red flags in this list)
- 5. **Hides at parties or avoids them**
- 6. **Prefers tight clothing**
- 7. **Wild child**– (extremely active, climbs, jumps, runs with no fear of getting hurt)
- 8. **Strong preference for bright, fast paced TV shows**
- 9. **Bites toys or people when unprovoked**
- 10. **Frequently doesn't seem to notice when being talked to or needs directions repeated**
- 11. **Has a meltdown in the store. Every. Time.** – (may be sensitive to fluorescent lights or sound in these environments)
- 12. **Never seems to get dizzy** – (strong indicator of sensory processing differences)
- 13. **Slouches all the time and seems sort of floppy** – (poor core strength)
- 14. **Freaks out when laid on back for diaper changes or washing hair** – (may seem scared)
- 15. **Won't walk barefoot outside**
- 16. **Particular about clothes** – (refuses or seems uncomfortable wearing some types)
- 17. **Has to have everything a certain way** – (commonly associated with other challenges too)
- 18. **Pushes people and objects all the time**
- 19. **Leans up against the washer or stereo speakers**
- 20. **Squeezes in tight spots** – (under or behind furniture)
- 21. **Frequently has a hard time transitioning in between activities**

If you feel you need more help for your child's sensory processing, contact your child's doctor or seek out an evaluation on your own from an occupational therapist (available in state early intervention programs for children under 3 or 5, private clinics, children's hospitals, and possibly your school district).