

The Sensory Foundation: Understanding Your Child's Brain-Body Messages

What This Article Is About

Sensory processing is how your child's brain and body take in and respond to the world. Every second, millions of signals flood in — only a small fraction reach awareness. Since kids' filters are still under construction, sensations can feel way too strong, too faint, or mixed up. Understanding this helps reframe behavior as brain-body communication, not misbehavior.

What You Might Notice

- Loves deep hugs but hates light touches
- Becomes overwhelmed in noisy, crowded places
- Doesn't realize they're hungry until melting down
- Constantly seeking spinning, crashing, or jumping before focusing

Quick Strategies

- **For Over-Responsive Kids:** Build predictable routines, offer noise-canceling headphones, give deep pressure before light touch, create calm break spaces.
- **For Under-Responsive Kids:** Use movement breaks to “wake up” the body, provide bold sensory cues, pair learning with physical activity, offer fidgets with texture.
- **For Sensory-Seekers:** Schedule safe “sensory snacks” throughout the day like trampolines, climbing, or chew-safe items.

Parent Takeaway

Your child's reactions are their nervous system doing its best. When you observe patterns and adjust the environment, you reduce stress, build readiness for learning, and help them feel safe in their world.