



Your Child's SEVEN Senses

*Keep reading and you can
learn to meet your child's
hidden needs and help your
child feel more calm, alert
and happy*



Be a detective and try “feeding” your child’s different senses when they need to be more calm or alert. Flip over or turn the page to find tools you can use for each sense. Write down what works and what doesn’t. Try each tool within a category a few times to see your child’s reaction and find out how much stimulation is enough to help, but not so much that it makes them too excited or upset.



We can all name the five senses: sight, sounds, smell, taste and touch. But did you know that we have TWO more senses that are *within* the body? The body also senses the world through pushing and pulling in our MUSCLES (and joints, tendons and ligaments), and through MOVING our head and body through space. Just like we may need an alarm clock and light (sound and sight) to wake up in the morning, our bodies work best with a “diet” of many sensations to help make us feel calmer or more alert.

Some children are over-responsive to sensations while others are under-responsive. Therefore their surroundings must be changed to meet their needs to have more or less stimulation around them. For example, an over-sensitive child may find the noise from the lights, the fan or the T.V. to be very distracting. Not only do they find it stressful, but they also may have a hard time hearing when their name is being called. An under-sensitive child may seek out stimulation by running around, jumping or crashing into objects or people or they might like to touch everything to get enough input for their hands to really feel it.

We know that it’s best for children and adults to get breaks from times of concentration by moving our bodies. These breaks are when we use a variety of sensory tools and strategies to “feed” our senses which makes us feel better – just like eating does when we are hungry. Each day, children need a few big breaks or “sensory meals” (20-30 minutes) and a couple short breaks or “sensory snacks” (5-15 minutes) in order to regulate their brains and bodies for optimal participation and performance. Sometimes it also helps to use these sensory meals and snacks WHILE we work, play, eat or do other activities.