

# An Introduction to Derbyshire Local Area Approach to Sensory Processing Needs

As children we are taught about our 5 senses, but we actually have 8 major sensory systems.

We use our senses: proprioception, interoception, vestibular, tactile, auditory, vision, smell and taste, in order to explore and make sense of our experiences and the world around us. Information from our senses is received by our brain which filters out all that is unnecessary and formulates a response to the information it receives.

Research has found that 'one in six children experiences sensory challenge significant enough to have an impact on their ability to learn.' \*

Children and Young People (CYP) with sensory processing needs may have a difference in the way their brain receives and makes sense of the information that it gets from their senses.

Some CYP receive too much information from sensory experiences whilst others will not receive enough. They will have the same experiences as their peer group but perceive them quite differently.

Sensory processing needs (difficulties in processing and formulating a response to sensory information) can impact upon the daily lives of CYP; and may present, to varying degrees, as a barrier to the development of independent daily living skills, building of positive relationships, emotional well-being and learning. The Derbyshire multi-professional approach to Sensory Processing Needs, endeavours to inform professionals, practitioners and families and support children and young people with sensory processing needs, in different environments.

## **Vocabulary**

**Proprioception.** This sense carries information from the muscles and joints to the brain. This information tells the brain where the body is in space so that we store an accurate body map. This sense also tells us also how much we need to move and how much pressure we need to apply to complete tasks.

**Interoception.** Interoceptive awareness is the ability to feel what is happening inside our body. It is recognising hunger, needing to use the bathroom, changes in temperature, blood sugar levels, heart rate, swallow, breathing rate and emotions for example and knowing what to do about it.

**Vestibular.** This sense is responsible for detecting movement through space and the position of your head. It controls balance, tells you if you are moving, how fast you are moving and in what direction.

**Tactile.** This is our sense of touch.

**Auditory.** This is our sense of hearing.

**Vision, Smell and Taste.** These complete our eight senses.

**Over-responsiveness:** receiving too much information and therefore avoiding sensory stimulation

**Under-responsiveness:** passively unaware of sensory information not received

**Sensory seeking:** under responsive but actively seeking sensory stimulation.

**Environmental audit** is the first step in identifying what factors are having an impact on the CYP's ability to access all aspects of life and learning.

Derbyshire value the views of the CYP and their parents and carers when addressing Sensory Processing Needs and aim to work together to create better outcomes for the children and young people of Derbyshire.

\*Sensory Over-Responsivity in Elementary School: Prevalence and Social-Emotional Correlates. A Ben-Sassoon, AS Carter, MJ Briggs-Gowen 2009)

**Derbyshire local area has created a Multi-Agency Sensory Processing Needs Toolkit which will give you a greater understanding of how CYP may be processing the sensory information around them and how to support them in school and Early Years settings.**

If you are considering using the **Derbyshire Sensory Processing Needs Toolkit** you should be familiar with:

- the Derbyshire Local Offer,
- the Derbyshire Position Statement on Sensory Processing Needs
- the contents of this leaflet

It is recommended that professionals should complete basic Sensory Processing Needs training as available through DCC Support Services.



Further information:

Please see the Derbyshire Local Offer:

<https://localoffer.derbyshire.gov.uk/#!/directory>

For Derbyshire Sensory training:

<http://www.services.derbyshire.gov.uk/Training>

Eventbrite EYSEN Service:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/derbyshire-eysen-service-34416713297>