The following checklist is not a diagnostic tool. Rather, it is an indicator of sensory over- or under-responsiveness. The purpose of this tool is to assist in developing an appropriate treatment plan, and/or sensory diet, for an individual with sensory modulation difficulties.

Remember that it is normal for all people to be sensitive to certain sensations. Sensory modulation becomes a disorder only when it is negatively impacting a person’s life (i.e. ability to pay attention, learn, socialize, relax).

* Indicates Sensory-Seeking behavior. Sensory-Seeking is a form of under-responsiveness but these individuals seek intense sensation to make up for the under-responsiveness of their nervous systems. The general under-responders tend to be more passive and sedentary than the sensory-seekers, but still share many symptoms.

**TACTILE (TOUCH)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms of Over-Responsiveness:</th>
<th>Symptoms of Under-Responsiveness:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_____ resistant to play in tactile materials such as rice or sand table</td>
<td>_____ often touches others*</td>
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<tr>
<td>_____ wears limited variety of clothing types/styles</td>
<td>_____ struggles with fine motor tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>_____ avoids messy play including finger-painting and play-doh</td>
<td>_____ drools</td>
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<tr>
<td>_____ resists stickers or stamps on skin</td>
<td>_____ doesn’t wipe runny nose</td>
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<tr>
<td>_____ limited food preferences, sensitive to food textures</td>
<td>_____ doesn’t seem to notice messy hands or face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ rubs skin where touched or appears agitated when touched</td>
<td>_____ touches everything, brings objects to mouth frequently*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ avoids standing close to others</td>
<td>_____ may stuff too much food in mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ startles easily when touched unexpectedly</td>
<td>_____ seems unaware of light touch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ overreacts to minor injuries</td>
<td>_____ doesn’t seem to notice cuts and scrapes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____ unintentionally rough with peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_____ often chews on pencil, shirt, or other objects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROPRIOCEPTIVE (PRESSURE AND MOVEMENT OF MUSCLES AND JOINTS)

Since proprioceptive input is always helpful to the nervous system, we do not see *over-responsivity* in this category.

Symptoms of Under-Responsiveness:
- _____ loves jumping, climbing, wrestling, and crashing activities*
- _____ walks on toes*, or walks heavily
- _____ difficulty with fine motor tasks
- _____ appears clumsy, may bump into people or objects often
- _____ sucks thumb or fingers, chews on clothes or pencils
- _____ grinds teeth, cracks knuckles*
- _____ prefers sitting on floor or standing rather than sitting in chair*
- _____ often wears tight-clothing or layers*
- _____ prefers to keep jacket/coat on
- _____ self-abusive behaviors – pinching, biting, head-banging*
- _____ moves constantly, seems unable to sit still
- _____ uses too much or too little force on objects (pencils, cups, doors)

VESTIBULAR (MOVEMENT)

**Symptoms of Over-Responsiveness:**
- _____ chooses sedentary activities rather than active ones
- _____ avoids swings, slides, anything that requires feet to be off the ground
- _____ seems to dislike bus, behavioral issues on bus, or “shuts down” after getting off bus in morning

**Symptoms of Under-Responsiveness:**
- _____ dislikes sedentary tasks*
- _____ is in constant motion, loves spinning, swinging
- _____ may have low muscle tone (muscles and joints seem too soft and floppy)
- _____ “W” sits on floor, slumps, leans in chair
- _____ rocks self or moves head back and forth while sitting*
INTEROCEPTION (INTERNAL SENSATIONS)

Symptoms of Over-Responsiveness:
- ___ seems to have a low pain tolerance
- ___ displays significant distress about very hot or very cold weather
- ___ complains frequently of aches and pains

Symptoms of Under-Responsiveness:
- ___ continues to have bowel and bladder accidents beyond an appropriate age
- ___ apparent lack of typical hunger/thirst
- ___ high pain tolerance or inappropriate response to pain
- ___ doesn’t dress appropriate for the weather
- ___ doesn’t seem aware of symptoms of illness such as sore throat or nausea

AUDITORY (SOUND)

Symptoms of Over-Responsiveness:
- ___ easily distracted and bothered by background noises
- ___ dislikes noisy places
- ___ cries, covers ears with loud or unexpected sounds
- ___ asks others to be quiet

Symptoms of Under-Responsiveness:
- ___ may not consistently respond to name (rule out hearing loss)
- ___ makes own sounds frequently, enjoys silly sounds of others*
- ___ says “What?” frequently even though hearing is intact
- ___ may appear oblivious to some sounds, has difficulty locating sound
- ___ may use self-talk to get through a task
- ___ trouble learning to read, or behind in reading
- ___ frequently needs instructions to be repeated

VISUAL

Symptoms of Over-Responsiveness:
- ___ bothered by bright lights, sun
- ___ dislikes visually busy places (cafeteria, playgrounds, cluttered rooms)
- ___ avoids eye contact
- ___ prefers dim lighting, shade
- ___ rubs eyes a lot, may get headaches during schoolwork

Symptoms of Under-Responsiveness:
- ___ loves shiny, spinning or moving objects*
- ___ difficulty with eye-hand coordination tasks (catching a ball, stringing (beads, tracing and writing)
- ___ loves action-packed, colorful t.v. shows and electronic games*
- ___ difficulty distinguishing between similar letters and shapes
- ___ difficulty with visual-tracking, may lose place frequently while reading
GUSTATORY AND OLFACTORY (TASTE AND SMELL)

Symptoms of Over-Responsiveness:
_____ talks about smell a lot, notices odors others don’t notice
_____ plugs nose, avoids places with strong smells (cafeteria)
_____ may have very limited food preferences

Symptoms of Under-Responsiveness:
_____ smells and licks inedible objects such as toys and play-doh*
_____ likes strong odors such as perfume, cleaning products, and gasoline*
_____ prefers strongly flavored foods - spicy, salty, bitter, sour, sweet*

*Indicates sensory-seeking behavior. See note at top of form.