

The Eight Sensory Systems

Taste (Gustatory)



- **Seeking:** The individual may have a preference towards crunchy, sour, spicy, or sweet foods. Uses oral sensory tools like chewies.
- **Avoiding:** The individual may reject certain textures or flavors; prefers limited diets with “safe” foods

Smell (Olfactory)



- **Seeking:** The individual is drawn to pleasant or familiar scents that aid focus.
- **Avoiding:** The individual reacts negatively to strong or unpleasant smells.

Vision



- **Seeking:** The individual may enjoy visual stimulation (e.g., flicking fingers, using sensory toys).
- **Avoiding:** The individual may be sensitive to bright lights or busy environments; may wear sunglasses or hats.

Touch (Tactile)



- **Seeking:** The individual may like engaging with textures, fidgets, and tactile play.
- **Avoiding:** The individual may not like certain fabrics, messy play, or unexpected touch.

Hearing (Auditory)



- **Seeking:** The individual may enjoy listening to loud music and rhythmic sounds.
- **Avoiding:** The individual may be sensitive to sudden or loud noises; may use noise-canceling headphones.

Proprioception



- **Function:** This sense helps the individual detect body position and movement through joints and muscles.
- **Seeking:** The individual may crave deep pressure or “heavy work” (e.g., carrying weighted items, pushing carts).
- **Avoiding:** The individual may appear clumsy or unsure of body positioning.

Vestibular



- **Function:** This sense regulates balance, movement, and spatial orientation.
- **Seeking:** The individual may enjoy spinning, swinging, and jumping.
- **Avoiding:** The individual may not like disorienting movement; may struggle with coordination.

Interoception



- **Function:** This sense detects internal body signals (e.g., hunger, thirst, pain, emotions).
- **Challenges:** The individual may have difficulty identifying or responding to internal needs; may not recognize hunger, fatigue, or pain.
- **Strategies:** Read [this tipsheet](#) to learn more about interoception and strategies for strengthening interoceptive awareness.