

School Checklist for Kids with SPD (Sensory Processing Disorder)

Creating a supportive and understanding environment for children with Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) is key to their success and well-being in school. This checklist is designed to help parents, educators, and therapists ensure that children with SPD have the accommodations they need to thrive in an educational setting.

Classroom Environment !

- **Quiet Space Available:** Ensure there is a designated quiet area where the child can go if they need a break from sensory overload.
- **Seating Options:** Offer various seating options to accommodate the child's sensory needs (e.g., stability balls, cushioned seats, or seating away from high-traffic areas).
- **Lighting Considerations:** Be mindful of lighting; natural light is preferable, and fluorescent lights should have filters if possible.
- **Noise Control:** Use headphones or earplugs to help the child manage noise sensitivities.
- **Visual Distractions Minimized:** Keep classroom walls clear of overwhelming or highly stimulating materials.

Personal Comfort !

- **Allow Personal Items:** Permit the child to have sensory tools or comfort items (e.g., stress balls, fidget devices) that help them focus or stay calm.
- **Clothing Considerations:** Be flexible with dress codes to accommodate sensory sensitivities related to clothing.
- **Food Flexibility:** Be aware of any texture or taste sensitivities with school-provided food and allow for alternatives when necessary.

Physical Activity and Breaks !

- **Scheduled Breaks:** Incorporate brief, regular breaks for movement or rest throughout the day to help the child regulate their sensory system.
- **Physical Education Accommodations:** Adjust physical education activities to suit the child's comfort level, and consider offering alternative activities if necessary.

Social and Emotional Support !

- **Peer Understanding:** Facilitate peer education and activities to promote understanding and inclusivity among classmates.
- **Communication with Parents:** Maintain open lines of communication with the child's parents to share observations and strategies that work well both at school and at home.
- **Access to Support Staff:** Ensure the child has access to counselors, therapists, or special education staff familiar with SPD and its management.

Teaching Strategies !

- **Visual Schedules:** Use visual schedules and cues to prepare the child for transitions and changes in activities.
- **Instruction Clarity:** Give clear, concise instructions and check for understanding to ensure that the child knows what is expected of them.
- **Alternative Assessment Methods:** Provide alternative ways to demonstrate knowledge if traditional testing methods cause distress or overwhelm.
- **Check for Sensory Overload:** Regularly check in with the child to assess for signs of sensory overload and adjust the environment or activities accordingly.

Implementing these accommodations can create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for children with Sensory Processing Disorder, facilitating their academic success and overall well-being. Remember, collaborating with the child, their family, and professionals who understand SPD is crucial to developing effective strategies tailored to each child's unique needs.

