



YOUTUBE FREEBIE

Sensory vs. Behavior

What's the difference and why does it matter?

First of all, when we are explaining 'sensory' & 'behavior,' we are not describing the child - we are describing the child's needs.

A 'sensory child' is one that seeks / avoids / craves sensory input throughout the day and it interferes with their ability to successfully participate in academic, social, and self-care activities.

A 'behavioral child' is one that seeks / avoids tasks for a variety of reasons, as a means of seeking positive or negative attention from an adult or peers.

What's the difference between behavioral responses and sensory responses?

All behavior has a root cause and even a child with sensory challenges is purpose driven to:

- avoid negative stimuli
- seek out positive stimuli they need for their body and brain
- control their environment

Children with or without SPD may attempt to manipulate and control others and their environment in order to feel in control of themselves.

Children with SPD may present as more rigid and controlling because children with sensory differences may literally be at the whim of their environment and thus feel out of control much of the time.

There is always the potential that it can be BOTH.

Sensory vs. Behavior Checklist

If A Child Displays One Or More Of These, Then It May Be:



Sensory Related

- ✓ Continues the negative action despite being provided with attention.
- ✓ Attempts to elope / leave the situation / hide.
- ✓ Not easily redirected.
- ✓ Struggles to communicate their feelings / behaviors from a certain situation.
- ✓ Seems to be 'out of control.'
- ✓ Appears to be in 'fight or flight.'
- ✓ Consistent difficulty with transitions.
- ✓ Change in routine affects mood and/or causes a meltdown.



Behavior Related

- ✓ Stops the negative action when provided with attention / or preferred item.
- ✓ Attempts to stay with the person they are seeking attention from.
- ✓ References people around them. i.e. looking at adult while engaging in behavior / watching for a reaction.
- ✓ Responds to firm and consistent limits and/or consequences for the negative behavior.
- ✓ Giggling / smiling / laughing during and/or after the behavior.
- ✓ Can stop behavior on command.
- ✓ Understanding how to push boundaries and exploring this new concept.

How do we help these children, regardless of the reason for the behavior?

1 CO-REGULATION

Be a source of positive and regulating input for the child. This is called co-regulation. We have the capacity as adults to modify our own behavior and emotional states to reflect back to the child the state we are wanting them to experience.

2 ENVIRONMENT

We have the control to put into or take away from the environment, things that may be overstimulating or not stimulating enough for the child until the child is old enough or in control enough to manage their own environment and strategies.

3 COMBINE STRATEGIES

Combining behavioral and sensory strategies is often the most effective approach to help children with sensory differences learn expected and unexpected behaviors.

Do NOT treat it from a behavioral standpoint alone.

The brain is not responding in a cortical manner (thinking, judgment, and reasoning) - it has shifted to brain stem level during a "fight or flight" episode.

4 SENSORY BREAK

Remove the child from the adverse stimuli and decrease sensory stimuli to a minimum. Provide a sensory space for the child, such as a low light fort loaded with pillows with other calming sensory tools.

Allow for the child to come out of the sensory space on their own terms. Their nervous system will know when it is ready.

Do not try to talk the child through it, calm, bargain, or rationalize.

Want more?!

CHECK OUT OUR DIGITAL COURSES!

- Primitive Reflex Digital Course
- Infant and Toddler Digital Course
- Sensory Diet Digital Course
- Gross Motor, Fine Motor, and Visual Skills Activity Courses
- Multi-Sensory Activity Course

<https://harkla.co/collections/courses>
