Sensory processing issues are...

- Difficulties in organizing information from the senses. These include responding to sights, sounds, smells, touch and sensory input related to balance and movement.
- Often called sensory processing disorder (SPD). Doctors might not use this term, but many occupational therapists do.
- A common co-occurrence. Sensory issues are often found in kids with ADHD or autism.

Sensory processing issues are not...

- Just kids being “too sensitive.” Sensory issues can be overwhelming and can make it hard to function in school and at home.
- A sign that kids need more discipline. Adults need to find out what’s causing kids to melt down, not punish them for it.
- Always consistent. Responses to sensory input can vary from kid to kid and from day to day.

Kids with sensory processing issues may have trouble with...

- Transitions and changes in routines
- Emotional regulation
- Reacting in unexpected ways to what they hear, see, smell, taste or touch
- Spatial awareness and sense of balance
- Eating, dressing, brushing teeth and other self-care skills
- Responding to pain (some kids are undersensitive to it)
- Social skills
- Fine motor skills
- Meltdowns from sensory overload
- Social skills

Ways to help kids with sensory issues

- **Occupational therapy** can help kids with sensory issues feel less overwhelmed, learn how to self-regulate and cope with challenging situations.
- **Classroom accommodations**, positive behavior intervention plans and informal supports like chewing gum or using a fidget can help at school.
- **Self-advocacy training** can help kids understand, ask for and explain to others what they need to succeed.

Success stories

- Temple Grandin, Ph.D., Professor of animal sciences
- James Durbin, Lead singer of Quiet Riot
- Mayim Bialik, Actress, author and neuroscientist

For more information on sensory processing issues and how to help, go to u.org/sensoryprocessing