

Hyper-reactivity

Below are some strategies that may be helpful if your child is **hyper-reactive** to sensory stimuli. If your child has hyper-reactivity, they will experience **too much** stimulation from incoming sensory information. You may find it helpful to work with an occupational therapist who can provide advice on how best to implement some of the strategies described. You can find more detail and other strategies in our [sensory processing guide for parents](#).

Auditory hyper-reactivity

Some children may get overwhelmed and distressed by noises in their environment. There are several adaptations you could provide in places you have control over (e.g. your home) and places you have less control over (e.g. public places).

In your home you could make adaptations such as installing carpets to dampen sounds, such as footfall, or turning off additional sounds (e.g. TV or radio) in busy environments.

Providing your child with a self-regulation strategy may be helpful, especially for situations where you cannot control the level of noise (e.g. public places). For example, you could give your child headphones to dampen out noise and provide calming music or white noise.

Tactile hyper-reactivity

If your child is sensitive to touch, try and avoid unexpectedly touching them. A good strategy to use is to let them know that they are about to be touched by using a picture card or a cue.

If you must queue in a line, see if your child feels more comfortable being at the back or the front.

Visual hyper-reactivity

If your child gets overwhelmed by bright lights, consider the following adaptations for the home and strategies for when you are out in public places:

- Use dimmer switches around the house
- Provide your child with sunglasses or a baseball cap
- Avoid seating your child directly under fluorescent lighting



Our sensory processing guide outlines the most common sensory processing difficulties, as well as providing an overview of sensory assessments, interventions and strategies for sensory processing difficulties. You can download the guide at <https://cerebra.org.uk/download/sensory-processing/>.

Olfactory (smell) hyper-reactivity

If your child is sensitive to smells in the environment, try to minimise these smells by using unperfumed toiletries and laundry detergents and keep rooms well ventilated.

Help your child to self-regulate by teaching them strategies such as; covering their nose with a tissue or communicating that a smell is unpleasant (either verbally or by alternative communication such as a picture card).

Gustatory (taste) hyper-reactivity

If your child is sensitive to food smells and textures, you could involve them in food shopping and food preparation. This gives your child the opportunity to familiarise themselves to food textures and smells, without having to eat the food.

During mealtimes make sure your child is in a calm environment and allow them to have preferred foods.

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