



Center of Sensory
Integration Excellence

Understanding Your Child's Sensory Evaluation

A Guide for Parents

What is a Sensory Evaluation?

A sensory evaluation helps determine how your child's processing of sensory input affects function and participation in everyday life, including play, eating, dressing, sleeping, learning, and social interactions.

The OT looks at how your child registers, processes, organizes, and responds to sensory information. Particular attention is given to the three body-centered sensory systems—vestibular, proprioceptive, and tactile—and how they affect motor coordination, regulation, and participation.

What does a Sensory Evaluation Include?

A thorough evaluation also uses more than one assessment, and it always considers the reason your child was referred along with other important context, such as your child's diagnosis (if any), age, and your family's needs and priorities. A sensory evaluation may include:

- Parent Interview/Intake
- Questionnaires
- Structured and unstructured observations
- Standardized assessments

Reflex integration is a different approach and is not part of a sensory integration evaluation.





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Understanding the Evaluation Process

What is being assessed?

A sensory integration evaluation gives particular attention to the three body-centered sensory systems: vestibular (balance and movement), proprioceptive (body awareness), and tactile (touch). The OT looks at how your child registers, responds to, and interprets information from these systems, and how this affects everyday function.

What kinds of challenges can it identify?

Looking at these systems helps the therapist determine whether sensory processing differences are affecting:

- **Modulation (level of arousal):** difficulty keeping the body and attention at the "just right" level
- **Motor planning (praxis):** difficulty generating, planning, and coordinating new or unfamiliar actions; challenges may also be seen in postural control and/or bilateral motor coordination

Why does a good evaluation matter?

Different sensory processing challenges require different intervention approaches. Understanding whether a child is having difficulty with modulation or motor planning helps guide the intervention, strategies, and goals.

Who should do the evaluation?

Sensory integration is a specialized area of occupational therapy practice. A sensory integration evaluation should be conducted by an occupational therapist (OT) with advanced training and experience in sensory integration assessment and clinical reasoning. Training, mentorship, supervision, and experience all influence the quality of the evaluation and interpretation of results.



Visit www.centerofsie.org for more information and guidance on choosing a qualified sensory integration provider.