

Helping My Child's Sensory Needs: Sensory Preference or Problem?



Did you know that you have sensory preferences? Just like favourite foods or types of music, everybody has likes and dislikes for their sensory system. Having preferences is an important part of growing up.

As adults, we make choices everyday, based on our sensory preferences, such as food, music, clothing and even what transport we use.

Your child's sensory preferences can be used as a strength! For play, for learning, and for regulation.

<p>What are you child's sensory likes, or favourite feelings?</p>	
<p>What are you child's sensory dislikes?</p>	

Sometimes a sensory **preference** can become a **sensory problem**:



- If a sensory dislike stops us doing an activity we care about, like avoiding birthday parties because of the noise.
- If a sensory dislike upsets us a lot and we can't avoid it because it's part of every day, life, like the sound of the school bell.
- If a sensory behaviour is a regular habit and causes harm or injury, like biting the skin or hitting the head.

It's important to support people to have sensory preferences. When there is a sensory problem, occupational therapists can help.

As OTs, our interest in sensory processing is because it is needed to allow children to do daily activities. If their sensory play or needs are different to other children, but not stopping them from doing daily activities, they would not need occupational therapy support at the moment.

