

Summary of Research Findings

Exploring the sensory profiles of children on the autism spectrum using the Short Sensory Profile-2 (SSP- 2)

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Overview

- We asked caregivers to rate their children's responses to everyday sensory input.
- We found (a) children showed more frequent responses to sensory input than average (b) most children showed more intense responses to sensory input. This included avoiding sensory input and sensitivity to sensory input.
- It is important to understand children's responses to sensory input to provide supportive environments.

Why did we do this study?

- Research has found children on the autism spectrum show marked differences in their response to sensory information and these responses vary between children. Understanding these differing responses will help in planning supportive environments for these children.

What did we do?

- We asked caregivers of children on the autism spectrum (aged 4 – 11 years) to complete the Short Sensory Profile-2 questionnaire. Caregivers rated how often their child showed a behavioural response to everyday sensory input.
- We had 271 parents completed this questionnaire.

What did we find?

- Based on caregiver responses, children were divided into two main groups.
- One group of children were reported to almost always show both high (intense) and low (reduced) response to the different sensory input.
- The second group of children were reported to frequently show high (intense) response to different sensory input.

What does this mean?

- Children on the autism spectrum demonstrate differences in their responses to sensory input.
- Most of the children were reported to show behaviours of avoiding some types of sensory input and sensitivity to some sensory input.
- The item *Is distracted when there is a lot of noise around* was rated frequently/almost always by most caregivers.
- To provide supportive environments we need to better understand children's responses to sensory input.

Where are we sharing this study?

This research has been published in the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* and is available by putting <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10803-019-03889-2> into google.