

THE SENSORY SYSTEMS AND HOW TO MEET THEIR NEEDS

We teach our children about the five senses (sight, sound, taste, touch, and hearing), but there are actually eight (8) sensory systems - each with its own functions and needs.

This is your cheat sheet to the sensory systems and ways to meet their needs for input.

SENSE	SYSTEM	FUNCTION	METHODS OF INPUT
Body Awareness	vestibular system	balance and orientation in space	exercise ball seating resistance (kick) bands movement breaks
Hearing	auditory system	processing what is heard	music or white noise through headphones, singing, clapping, musical instruments
Internal	interoceptive system	sensations related to physical condition	small snacks before bedtime or transitions, feeling
Movement	proprioceptive system	sense of muscle and/or joint systems	climbing, jumping, hugs and physical contact, weighted items
Sight	visual system	processing what is seen	flashlights, lava lamps, intentional screen time, colors and patterns
Smell	olfactory system	processing smell	smelling bottles from spices or essential oils on a cotton ball, scented candles
Taste	gustatory system	processing taste	sugar-free gum, chewable jewelry, small seasoning packets for travel
Touch	tactile system	processing information received by touch	stress balls, Legos, fidget spinners, water, stretchy bands, Play Doh, sand, Velcro

*Systems and functions from [Star Institute](#)

**Methods of input from [Twenty-One Senses](#)

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