

# WHEN YOUR SENSORY NEEDS ARE DIFFERENT FROM YOUR CHILD'S

## Examples of Mismatched Sensory Needs

-A mom who loves to snuggle and hug + a kiddo who doesn't like a lot of physical touch

-A kiddo who loves to tackle and play rough + a dad who gets cranky and overwhelmed around loud/active/rough play

-Parents who love to try new and different foods and recipes + a little one who is a picky eater and very sensitive to smells and tastes.

-A dad who likes sports or adventurous outdoor activities + a kiddo who prefers quieter, less active play.

## What to Do When Your Sensory Needs and Your Child's Sensory Needs Don't Match Up

### 1 || Work on transitions.

Packing up/bundling up/getting ready to leave the house can be a tough time when it comes to sensory overload. Keeping things organized and planning ahead as much as possible are the two keys to success.

### 2 || Practice self-care

This involves making sure that everyone in the household is able to get what they need sometime throughout the day. This could mean finding time and space for yoga/meditation if you crave silence. Or maybe it means lots of outdoor play after school for kids who really need to move.

### 3 || Find a buddy

.Connecting with other parents and families is a great way to take some of the pressure off of the situation. Parents need to vent to other trusted parents when the going gets tough and kids tend to gravitate toward other kids who are a match for them.

### 4 || Find your common ground

Even when a significant sensory mismatch exists between you and your child, chances are that there are some aspects of your sensory makeup and your child's sensory makeup that do match up. Do your best to find what that common ground is and use it to connect with your child by engaging in activities you both enjoy.

# WHEN YOUR SENSORY NEEDS ARE DIFFERENT FROM YOUR CHILD'S (CONTINUED)

## 5 || Learn more about sensory processing and talk it out

.Learning more about the sensory systems and how they work together is another great way to support everyone's needs. And once you recognize the sensory matches and mismatches in your family, don't be afraid to talk about them! Explain what's happening, validate both of your needs, explore and explain the sensory systems and sensory processing.

## 6 || Divide and conquer

It's often easier to get everyone's sensory and activity needs met when you're one-on-one with your kids. Try separating and engaging in different activities when possible.

This can mean splitting up the childcare duties with your partner, spouse, grandparent, or a sitter.

## 7 || Keep a consistent routine.

Having a good routine can help guarantee that everyone in the household is getting what they need. This may involve daily quiet time, a consistent bedtime, and/or a structured morning routine. This will be different for every family. Schedule in physical activity/rough house play, outdoor play, music time, messy play – whatever your family needs!

## 8 || Write it down

At the end of the day, write down the instances that you remember when things felt "mismatched" between you and your child. Then, with an understanding of sensory processing in mind, look back at your notes and see if these were times when you were feeling overwhelmed or annoyed when kids were doing the very things they needed to do to stay regulated, focused, happy, and in control of their bodies and behavior.