When to Take a Closer Look at Behavior Related to Sensory Challenges

If you observe a child having frequent and intense behaviors like the ones listed below, it’s time to take a closer look. It is important to remember that ALL children demonstrate some of these behaviors at some time.

Sensory Challenge: Impulsive, easily distracted  
Observable Behavior: Running, moving constantly, attending to everything around them

Sensory Challenge: Poor self-image  
Observable Behavior: Says negative things about themselves

Sensory Challenge: Difficulty with Transitions  
Observable Behavior: Kicking, screaming, and/or hitting when going from one activity to another or going from one place to another (i.e. home to day care)

Sensory Challenge: Difficulty establishing appropriate sleeping and eating patterns  
Observable Behavior: Sleeps very little or sleeps all the time

Sensory Challenge: Unable to calm themselves  
Observable Behavior: Aimless running

Sensory Challenge: Overreaction to stimuli  
Observable Behavior: Cries uncontrollably when the fire alarm goes off; gags on certain food

Sensory Challenge: Unusually high activity level  
Observable Behavior: Always on the go

Sensory Challenge: Unusually low activity level  
Observable Behavior: Moves slowly; tires easily; little interest in the world

Sensory Challenge: Social problems  
Observable Behavior: Trouble getting along with others; doesn’t like people to get too close or is always touching or getting too close to others

Sensory Challenge: Emotional responses
**Observable Behavior:** Overly sensitive, demanding, aggressive, irritable, isolated

**Sensory Challenge:** Speech and language delays
**Observable Behavior:** Hitting, biting, pushing, pinching

**Sensory Challenge:** Gross and fine motor coordination problems
**Observable Behavior:** The child’s body may be unusually tense or loose; the child may be clumsy or accident prone

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