

Article title: Caregiver Strategies to Sensory Features for Children with Autism and Developmental Disabilities

Key points:

- Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Developmental Disabilities (DD) respond to sensory stimuli in three different patterns: hyperresponsiveness, hyporesponsiveness and sensory seeking
- Utilizing different caregiver strategies for different sensory response patterns is the most effective when dealing with sensory stimuli
- Slowing increasing participation in once averted situations is a helpful strategy for hyperresponsiveness
- Increased engagement is a helpful strategy in hyporesponsiveness
- Diverting a child’s attention from the stimuli was a helpful strategy for those that identify as sensory seeking

Glossary:

- **Hyperresponsive:** and exaggerated response to an aversion to sensory stimuli
- **Hyporesponsive:** lack of response to sensory stimuli
- **Sensory Seeking:** fascination with or craving sensory stimuli
- **Convergent parallel design:** quantitative and qualitative elements are conducted in the same phase of the research process
- **SEQ-2.1:** a 43- item caregiver report instrument designed to evaluate everyday sensory experiences in children
- **Mental age:** derived from cognitive assessments of the patient
- **Chronological age:** calculated from the child’s birthdate to the completion of the testing

Why this article matters: Utilizing caregiver strategies that correspond with the specific pattern of reaction proves to be beneficial to a child’s sensory response.

Description of the study:

Researchers noted both qualitative and quantitative pieces when figuring out children’s reactions to everyday sensory experiences and noted what strategies caretakers used to respond to their behavior.

They did this by:

1. Examining the ratings associated with the children’s behavior across the three response patterns and the amount of behavioral management strategies caregivers used
2. Examining the data to identify specific types of caregiver strategies
3. Comparing the data to see where it aligned and where it went wrong

Research questions:

- Can different caregiving strategies help specific patterns of reaction to sensory stimuli?
- What are the best approaches for each pattern?

Instructions for researchers:**Important results:**

- Children's levels of hyperresponsiveness, hyperresponsiveness, and sensory seeking were significant predictors of the amount of caregiver strategies used during everyday activities.
- Strategies used to support children who displayed hyperresponsiveness were significantly different from the strategies used for hypo-responsive or sensory seeking behaviors.
- Some behaviors became easier to manage for the caretakers after repetition of strategies. This caused variability in what behaviors caregivers defined as most challenging after retesting.

How the results will be used:

- To supply strategies to caregivers to help assist with a child's specific sensory response
- To learn more about the subgroups of children with mixed patterns of responses and how to best support them
- Future research may explore more on the caregiver side such as their attitudes, beliefs and psychological characteristics that may affect the strategies utilized.

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