

## Adult Sensory Checklist

*Adapted from the Alert Program® by Williams & Shellenberger (1996)*

*This checklist helps you notice what types of sensory input help you feel calm, alert, or overwhelmed. It can support you to better understand your own preferences and how these may be similar or different from your child's.*

### **Instructions**

**Go through each sensory category** and tick each sensory preference and/or strategy that applies to you

**Reflect** on patterns — what types of input (movement, touch, taste, etc.) do you lean on most or avoid? What are your go to strategies?

**Compare with your child:** think about how similar or different their needs may be — often, children need more intense or frequent sensory experiences to get the same effect

### **Oral-Motor (Mouth Movements)**

- I chew gum, pens, or other objects without noticing.
- I like having something in my mouth (e.g. sweets, drinks, snacks).
- I bite my lips, nails, or inside of my cheeks when thinking.
- I use sucking (e.g. straws, bottles, hot drinks) to calm down.
- I feel better after eating chewy or crunchy foods.

### **Sound (Auditory)**

- I like background music while I work.
- I need complete quiet to concentrate.
- Sudden/loud noises make me feel anxious, I use headphones to dull the noise
- I enjoy humming, whistling, singing, or tapping.
- I get distracted by ticking clocks or people chewing.

### **Sight (Visual)**

- I prefer tidy, clutter-free spaces.
- I enjoy watching movement like flickering candles or moving trees.
- I'm distracted by bright lights or messy rooms.
- I like wearing colours or patterns.
- I turn off the TV or close my eyes to rest.

### **Smell (Olfactory)**

- I use scented candles, perfumes, or essential oils to relax.
- I am sensitive to strong smells (e.g. cleaning products, perfume).
- Cooking smells irritate me.
- I notice smells others don't.
- I open windows for fresh air when I feel overwhelmed.

### **Taste (Gustatory)**

- I like strong tastes like sour, salty, or spicy food, I add flavour to my meals
- I eat chewy or crunchy foods to help me focus.
- I avoid certain food textures or temperatures.
- I drink tea or coffee to help me feel awake or calm.
- I find comfort in familiar foods.

### **Touch (Tactile)**

- I enjoy soft textures (e.g. blankets, fluffy clothes).
- I dislike tags in clothing or certain fabrics.
- I seek out physical contact like hugs or massage.
- I avoid being touched unexpectedly (in crowds or in queues)
- I fidget with objects or clothes to stay focused.

### **Movement (Vestibular)**

- I enjoy swinging, spinning, or rocking.
- I feel dizzy or disoriented easily.
- I use walking or movement to help me think.
- I avoid escalators or theme park rides.
- I prefer sitting still or moving slowly.

### **Body Awareness (Proprioception)**

- I feel better after lifting, pushing, or carrying heavy things.
- I crack my knuckles, clench fists, or chew pens.
- I like tight clothes or wrapping myself in blankets.
- I struggle to judge how hard I'm pressing, holding, or moving.
- I fidget or shift position to stay comfortable.

### **Inside Feelings (Internal Awareness)**

- I'm aware when I'm hungry, thirsty, or need the toilet.
- I know when I'm tired or over stimulated.
- I struggle to notice when I'm stressed until it's too late.
- I use deep breathing or mindfulness to calm myself.
- I need reminders to check in with how I feel.