



	<b>Autism (Autistic Disorder)</b>	<b>Asperger's</b>
<b>IQ</b>	Majority below average	Average or above average
<b>Learning Style</b>	Rote, rigid	Learning Disorder, difficulty with abstract processing
<b>Diagnosis</b>	Early Childhood	Early childhood-adolescence, multiple diagnosis
<b>Language Onset</b>	Delayed, disordered	Disordered
<b>Language Problems</b>	Processing	Pragmatics
<b>Language Quality</b>	Limited Grammar & vocabulary, echolalia, rote speech	Above average grammar & vocabulary, cliché' phrases, adult-like speech
<b>Social relationships</b>	Limited awareness	Awareness of differences
<b>Seizures</b>	25-30% have seizures	Incidence consistent with general population (1-10%)
<b>Sensory Issues</b>	Significant	Subtle
<b>Obsessive Interests</b>	Object focused	Topic/ subject or knowledge area focused

Above information from Fraser Child and Family Center®

### SENSORY SYSTEM

Each day, we all receive information through our senses that helps us to organize our behavior and to interact, explore, and navigate successfully within our environments. Most of us are able to readily identify the five senses of sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell, besides these basic five senses, we have other important senses. A. Jean Ayres, OTR, PhD, has identified the following additional fundamental sensory systems:

- ❖ Tactile sense: provides us with information through the surface of our skin about shape, size, and texture of objects in our environment. This sense tells us if we are touching something or if something is touching us. The importance of this sense is that it helps us to identify between touch that is threatening and non-threatening. (This is a complex component of the sense of touch.)
- ❖ Vestibular sense: provides us with information about balance and movement, gravity, and space, and where our body is in relation to the surface of the earth. This information comes to us through the functions of the inner ear. Have you ever noticed that when an individual has an inner ear infection, balance is often affected? Swinging, running, and riding a bike give input to this sensory system.

- ❖ Proprioceptive sense: provides us with information about where our body parts are and helps us plan and coordinate movement. This information comes from our muscles, joints, and ligaments. It is referred to as our “muscle sense.”

***These three senses are often referred to as the “hidden” senses. They are just as important to our comfort, independence, and ability to learn as the senses that are most familiar to us.***

Some of the observable behaviors that result from a sensory system that is not properly interpreting information include: being over-reactive to touch, movement, sound, or visual sights; being under-reactive to touch, movement, sound, or visual sights; unusually high or low level of activity; delays in learning and/or developing self-help skills; difficulty organizing and regulating behavior; and poor self-esteem. Individuals who are under-reactive will seek out more input in a given sensory area; they are referred to as “sensory seeking” and may crave stimulation in a certain sensory area. Those who are over-reactive will avoid certain sensory experiences to enable them to cope with unwanted sensory input; these individuals are referred to as “sensory avoiding.”

### **Resources**

- Fraser [www.fraser.org](http://www.fraser.org)
  - ❖ Tip sheets including making your own weighted blankets or stuffed animals
- CICC Website [www.inclusivechildcare.org](http://www.inclusivechildcare.org)
- [www.macmh.org](http://www.macmh.org) information sheets
- [www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)
- Pacer [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)