

Sensory Processing Tactile Seeking

The **tactile**, or touch receptors, are located under the skin and differentiate light touch and pressure touch. Light touch sensation alerts the nervous system to be wary of possible danger. Pressure touch calms the nervous system. Processing touch is important as it allows us to discriminate shapes, textures and sizes by touch. It is fundamental to how we learn about our environment and our body's boundaries.

Tactile seeking

A child who is seeking tactile input may:

- Touch people and objects e.g. touching other children at mat time
- Use touch to explore
- Enjoy or seek out tactile situations e.g. cuddles or messy play
- Fidget with hands
- Chew on objects



Tactile seeking strategies

Interventions are directed at providing regular tactile input throughout the child's day. This will reduce their need to seek out tactile experiences that interfere with their ability to carry out everyday activities.

1. Provide lots of opportunities to explore using touch and incorporate touch into games and activities e.g.
 - Encourage messy play e.g. clay, sand, finger-painting, shaving cream
 - Hide objects in bins of beans, or rice
 - Walk along different textures
 - Encourage a variety of food textures and temperatures
 - Provide a variety of clothing textures
2. At quiet times when your child is expected to focus, allow them to engage in some tactile activities e.g.
 - Provide a fidget toy, such as a stress ball or small toy.
 - Provide a range of textures for your child to explore.
 - Provide a range of different fabrics your child can stroke whilst sitting still.
3. Incorporate regular deep pressure tactile input throughout the day. Deep pressure touch is very calming and regulating. See attached sheets for activity ideas.

