



Tips for Helping Children with Sensory Processing Issues Get Dressed

For children with [sensory processing issues](#), certain clothing items may be bothersome. Even tiny tags and seams, which those without sensory sensitivities may not notice at all, can be extremely distracting and upsetting. However, there are also certain types of clothing, such as weighted vests, which may be comforting and calming.

On this page, we'll discuss a few tips that can help parents select clothing for kids with sensory processing issues.

It is important to keep in mind that some children with sensory processing issues have co-occurring physical disabilities, caused by associated conditions such as [hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy \(HIE\)](#) and [cerebral palsy \(CP\)](#). For these children, it may be important to find [adaptive clothing](#) that is especially easy to take on and off and can accommodate equipment such as a wheelchair, feeding tube, or orthotic device/brace. Fortunately, because many children have both physical disabilities and sensory issues, clothing companies often work hard to ensure that their adaptive clothing is also sensory-friendly.

Here are some tips for helping children with sensory issues pick out clothes and get dressed (1, 2):

Choose soft clothing: You may want to avoid choosing fabrics that are scratchy or stiff, or clothing that has rough edges, tags, or appliquéd designs on it. It may be helpful to use hand-me-downs that have been washed several times as well, as they will lose some of their rough qualities over time.

Get rid of tags and seams: These elements of clothing can be especially irritating to those with sensory sensitivities. Many retailers now offer tagless and seamless clothing. However, if this is not easy to find or afford, try clipping tags or placing adhesive bandages over them.

Choose socks that won't slip: Avoid socks that can fall down into the insides of shoes.

Give them the choice: Allow the child to choose his or her clothing whenever possible, knowing that they will often make sensory-positive choices for themselves.

Choose comfortable undergarments: Choose undergarments that are seamless and tagless



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whenever possible. This will help the child to better deal with other necessary layers that may not be as comfortable.

Avoid bunching: Choose clothing for your child that doesn't bunch, like briefs and bathing suits without netting for boys and sports bras for girls.

Be flexible about weather-appropriate clothing: Many children with sensory sensitivities are bothered by winter clothes. Therefore, it may be important to practice wearing these clothes for short periods of time before it gets really cold, or to have them dress in layers so that they can easily remove outerwear once they are indoors. Some parents also buy softer/less stiff items like sweatshirts or fleeces for children who really dislike wearing coats.

Experiment with nighttime clothing: Help your child to get enough sleep by ensuring that they are comfortable overnight. This may mean asking them about their preferences for heavier or lighter blankets, cotton or flannel clothing choices, or other different texture issues that can come up during the night.

Choose heavy clothing: Some children with sensory processing issues take comfort in the feeling of heavy clothing. Adding thicker layers may be better for them than several thin layers during winter. Items such as weighted vests or blankets may also be useful.

Explain consequences: Point out to your child what the consequences of dressing a certain way can be. For example, you could say something like "You got wet because you weren't wearing a raincoat." They may still refuse to wear certain items, but conversations like these can help them weigh the pros and cons of various choices.

Choose natural clothing: Synthetic clothing materials may be distractingly irritating to a sensory-sensitive child. Look for more natural products, like 100% cotton materials.

Avoid difficult elements: Clothing with complicated buttons, snaps, or zippers can be all the more frustrating for children with sensory processing issues. Choose velcro fasteners or drawstrings whenever possible.

Related Reading

[Adaptive Clothing Lines for Children with Disabilities](#)

About the HIE Help Center and ABC Law Centers

The HIE Help Center is run by [ABC Law Centers](#), a medical malpractice firm exclusively



handling cases involving HIE and other birth injuries. Our lawyers have over 100 years of combined experience with this type of law, and have been advocating for children with HIE and related disabilities since the firm's inception in 1997.

We are passionate about helping families obtain the compensation necessary to cover their extensive medical bills, loss of wages (if one or both parents have to miss work in order to care for their child), assistive technology, and other necessities.

If you suspect your child's HIE may have been caused by medical negligence, please [contact us](#) today to learn more about pursuing a case. We provide free legal consultations, during which we will inform you of your [legal options](#) and answer any questions you have. Moreover, you would pay nothing throughout the entire legal process unless we obtain a favorable settlement.

You are also welcome to reach out to us with inquiries that are not related to malpractice. We cannot provide individualized medical advice, but we're happy to track down informational resources for you.

Sources

Wright, L. W. (n.d.). 6 Clothing Solutions for Kids With Sensory Processing Issues. Retrieved August 12, 2019, from <https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/sensory-processing-issues/6-clothing-solutions-for-kids-with-sensory-processing-issues>

Kay, M. A. (n.d.). What to Do When Your Child Refuses to Put On Winter Clothes. Retrieved August 12, 2019, from <https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/sensory-processing-issues/what-to-do-when-your-child-refuses-to-put-on-winter-clothes>