

A Day in the Life of a Child with Sensory Integration Difficulties



This is Ben, a 10 year old with difficulties with Sensory Integration. He's a bright boy, but due to his sensory integration challenges his behaviour is often misunderstood by his family members, teachers and friends. To see how difficulties with sensory processing and integration can affect children in everyday life, take a look at a typical day in Ben's life.



7:00 am

Ben tries to get out of his bunk bed. Getting up and down from it is a real challenge as he has to work very hard at coordinating his movements to do this. He misses the bottom step and falls onto the floor and hurts his foot. His mum has told him that it might be easier to sleep on the bottom bunk but all of his friends have bunk beds and sleep on the top bunk.

*Sensory Integration challenge:
Motor planning and knowing where
his body is in space*

Ben's difficulties with sensory processing and integration may include the following:

- Being under or over-sensitive to sounds, textures, flavours, smells or other sensory input
- Having difficulty carrying out new activities
- Having difficulty with bumping into things and knowing where your body is in space
- Seeking or avoiding certain types of movement
- Having difficulty with emotional regulation



7:15 am

Ben has managed to get downstairs for breakfast in spite of injuring his foot. He is really upset as the apple juice is finished and his mum has offered him orange juice with bits instead. He does not like the texture of this juice in his mouth. The supermarket has run out of his favourite cereal and now he has to try a new type of cereal which is unsettling. Ben is upset and feels that his morning has got off to a bad start.

*Sensory Integration challenge:
Sensitivity to food, Emotional
Regulation*



8:00 am

Ben rushes to get dressed for school. He doesn't like the texture of the label in his school t-shirt and asks his mum to cut it off. He has misplaced his school jumper again and spends a long time looking for it. It was in his room but he just can't see it. Ben finds shoe laces a struggle but doesn't want to be different from the other boys in his class. His mum ends up tying his shoelaces and Ben is relieved that there is no PE that day so that he wouldn't have to take his shoes off.

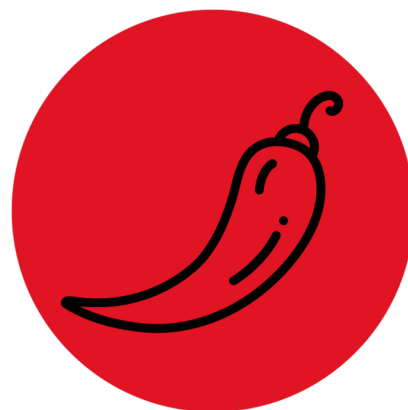
*Sensory Integration challenge:
Sensitivity to textures. Visual
discrimination.*



10:30 am

It's playtime at school. Ben can't wait to get outside as it's been very difficult sitting still all morning first in assembly and then for a test. Playtime quickly becomes less fun when the other boys decide to play football and Ben doesn't get picked for a team because he sometimes misses the ball which frustrates the other boys. He spends the rest of the break running around by himself.

Sensory Integration challenge:
Vestibular processing difficulties



12:30 pm

Ben is hungry but is worried about what's for dinner today. Yesterday's spaghetti was a bit too spicy and he spilled the sauce all over his jumper. For a while he bought a packed lunch but ended up losing his lunchbox a lot so he is eating lunch at school again. The food ended up being okay today but Ben didn't enjoy lunch as the dinner hall was too noisy and he dropped his tray again on the way out when he tried to pass a group of other children and wasn't sure how to get past them.

Sensory Integration challenge:
Sensitivity to food and noise,
motor planning



4:30 pm

Ben is attending an after-school club today. The club coordinator thought a craft activity might be fun but Ben is finding getting his hands full of paint and glue annoying. Ben is trying to make a cardboard model car but it's not working out the way he wants to as he keeps misjudging the size of the pieces that he needs.

Sensory Integration challenge:
Visual discrimination, motor planning, sensitivity to textures



7:30 pm

It's bath time. Mum says the water is fine but it is too hot for Ben. He adds lots more cold water. Ben doesn't like the soap to smell too strong and prefers plain soap with no smell. His favourite towel and soft pyjamas makes him feel better after the bath. He has a new electric toothbrush which he likes as it cleans his teeth quicker and softer than his previous toothbrush. Sensory Integration challenge: Sensitivity to textures and smells

Sensory Integration challenge:
Sensitivity to textures and smells



What can be perceived as a regular day for many children, has turned into a stressful day for Ben due to his challenges with Sensory Processing and Integration. He goes to bed exhausted.

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