

# Is Your Child Experiencing Sensory Overload?



*Some children become overwhelmed when they experience too many sensations coming into the body at one time. Examples of sensory overload include becoming visually overwhelmed in crowded places; experiencing more movement than the body can process on an amusement park ride; or finding the classroom too noisy.*

*Children generally respond to sensory overload in two ways— by trying to limit stimulation or by acting out behaviorally. Your child may try to remove themselves from the situation or become irritable or defiant. Your child's ability to respond appropriately is based on the foundation of their basic senses: touch, vision, hearing, movement, and an internal awareness of where they are in space. A child who has difficulty integrating their senses may be diagnosed with a sensory processing disorder. A pediatric occupational therapist can support a child with this disorder.*

## **What can you do about sensory overload?**

- *Keep your child's routine predictable;*
- *Be sure your child is getting adequate sleep;*
- *Offer nutritious meals and snacks;*
- *Ensure your child exercises regularly;*
- *Plan a schedule that spreads out activities and includes down time to help your child's nervous system to relax;*
- *Seek professional support from a pediatric occupational therapist with a specialty in sensory processing disorder.*