



# FAMILY WELLNESS FIRST

## Sensory Sensitivities and Chiropractic Care

Author // Janaiah von Hassel

Sensory processing disorder is an impairment in detecting, modulating or responding to sensory stimuli. In other words, the nervous system (brain, spinal cord and nerves) are not working properly. Misalignments of the spine, called subluxations, can cause this malfunction in how the brain interprets the sensory intake, and for my son, that's exactly what was happening.

I remember one day in particular where I was at a loss for how to help my son. He had fallen and gotten hurt and as he ran to me crying with his arms outstretched for the security of his mother's arms, he recoiled in utter dismay at the impact of my touch. He pulled away and sitting like a ball on the ground he would reach for me but pull away the moment I touched him. It was as if my touch were needles to his skin. I sat next to him and together we cried.

While the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) does not include SPD as a stand-alone disorder, many therapists and parents are exploring its significant effects on adolescents.

Photo Courtesy of Dreamstime.com - Nscotta



I will be the first to admit that labelling those whose sensitivities or tolerances do not fit the norm is hardly helpful. There are times when it seems that we over-label and over-respond to the many challenges of childhood. However, for many children, an inability to properly integrate their sensory intake can range from mildly annoying to downright devastating.

My son would easily gag from certain textures of food. He was always pulling off clothing, and he screamed through his diaper changes. His world was a hostile environment, and there was no escaping it. He would wake up crying and shaking as his body tried to adjust to its surroundings. Any change in temperature was upsetting to him, loud noises were bothersome, bright lights intolerable, and he became self-injurious in his attempts to escape what he interpreted as an overwhelming and painful world.

For any parent dealing with a sensory sensitive child, the idea of chiropractic care can seem unfathomable. A parent may wonder how a child who can hardly bare to be touched could tolerate a chiropractic adjustment, and yet for everything we had attempted in the past to help my son with sensory issues, chiropractic was the least invasive and by far the most effective.

When my son began receiving regular chiropractic care, I immediately saw an improvement in his ability to process his senses. Our chiropractor explained that my son had been in a chronic state of fight or flight-- a physiological reaction to perceived harm.

After my son's first week of regular care, we were already seeing a calm come over him, and after three months of chiropractic care, his ability to determine the threat of his surroundings based on his sensory intake was completely rehabilitated.

I watched with stark amazement, as my son became a better eater, started playing in the dirt, was happy to jump in mud puddles, and got dressed with ease and comfort. It felt like my son was given the world, and I was given back my son who now cuddles with joy and ease.

## *Establishing and Advancing the Chiropractic Family Wellness Lifestyle*

The Journal of Pediatric Maternal and Family Health reports that chiropractic care improves sensory processing disorder (volume 2012-issue 4-page99108) and hundreds of case studies support its claims. Not all children react the same to sensory integration issues. For some children their nervous system is under-reactive, and for others it may be over-reactive, as it was for my son. Some children experience a mix of both extremes, but this is often the body's response to spinal misalignment and can easily be improved under chiropractic care.

Our minds and bodies are incredible, and when functioning properly, we interpret thousands of messages through the nervous system every second. When that system is out of balance, it's easy to imagine that the messages can get distorted.

I have since encouraged many of my friends whose children suffered from SPD to seek chiropractic care, and I have seen repeatedly the power that the body has to adjust and adapt to its surroundings when interference is removed.

To learn more about sensory processing disorder and what can be done to improve it, please visit:

<http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/inspirational/what-is-sensory-processing-disorder.html>



**Janaiah von Hassel**, CEO of Kiro Kidz, is a proud mother of two young boys, Landon and Corbin, who she happily nurtures alongside her husband, Matthew. Janaiah turned to chiropractic after receiving her son's autism diagnosis and, in doing so, discovered that her entire family benefited from care. In her desire to spread the word, she has found great fulfillment in her work with Dr. Todd Defayette on the creation and development of Kiro Kidz. This animated children's book tells an exciting tale of the benefits of chiropractic care.

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