Individuals with sensory processing disorders, or sensory integration dysfunction, often have a combination of responses to sensory input. Depending on the type of input, some are sensory seekers, some are sensory avoiders, some have difficulty with motor output, and some have difficulty with discriminating input.

One of the most overlooked sensory differences is under-responsivity. Individuals who are under-responsive to input are often seen as passive, quiet, apathetic, or lethargic. They do not respond to sensory input unless it is intense. They may not respond to sensory input that is typically aversive, such as pain, pressure, or extreme temperatures. They also do not tend to have sensory seeking behaviors or self-stimulation.

Some general symptoms of sensory under-responders:

- Appear to have difficulty getting started on tasks
- May not respond to body information or be aware of pain and sickness
- May not attend to or respond to verbal or auditory input and may miss out on important information
- May move slowly and appear lethargic
- May prop head on hands when working or have trouble maintaining posture
- May have trouble waking up each morning
- May seem unmotivated
- May ignore unpleasant sounds or odors in the environment
- May not notice when they are touching others or being touched
- Does not engage easily into activities or conversations
- May be underestimated in terms of intelligence or ability
- May become dependent on others
Strategies for sensory under-responders in the classroom:

- Provide intense sensory input daily (under consultation of an OT)
- Use fidgets throughout day
- Provide oral input and strong flavors (gum, mint/cinnamon/sour flavors, flavored water, crunchy or chewy snacks)
- Provide movement breaks, such as bouncing and swinging throughout the day
- Increase lighting in the morning to help wake up
- Do movement-based activities in the morning before attempting seated work
- Include bright colors and contrasting colors in activities
- Highlight important information on worksheests
- Monitor for safety, injuries, and illness
- Use adapted seating to increase arousal, such as a therapy ball or adapted stool
- Include functional heavy work (carrying, pushing, and pulling) activities into work and play