

# What Are the Benefits of Sensory Integration for children using a Weighted Vest?

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**Sensory Integration Disorder** occurs when a child is unable to properly process sensory stimuli from his environment. Children who have difficulty processing the proprioceptive sense can often benefit from a weighted vest.

## *What Is the Proprioceptive Sense?*

1. Carol Stock Kranowitz, author of *The Out-of-Sync Child*, describes the proprioceptive sense as "the position sense." This refers to the child's perception of his body in space and movement.

## *What Are Characteristics of Proprioceptive Dysfunction?*

2. Some children may have difficulty determining where their body is in space. These are the children who are frequently crashing into and touching things, using objects and playing roughly. They often prefer very tight clothing. Others have extremely poor fine motor and gross motor coordination. Still others have extremely poor posture.

## *What Is a Weighted Vest?*

3. A weighted vest is literally a vest with weights sewn inside or placed inside pockets in the vest. They can be constructed at home or ordered from [www.aokhealth.com](http://www.aokhealth.com) or picked up at retailers such as Rebel Sport or Workout World. Your child's occupational therapist will determine the proper weights and the proper schedule for wearing the vest.

## *What Are the Benefits of a Weighted Vest?*

4. Because the weighted vest provides a constant and even deep pressure, the child is receiving the sensory input she craves. She is more aware of her body's position in space and can better control her movements. Motor coordination and spatial perception improves. She is more calm and focused, allowing her to better concentrate on the tasks at hand.

## *What Else Can Enhance the Benefits of a Weighted Vest?*

5. Your child's occupational therapist will prescribe a special sensory diet (that is, the variety of stimuli you can provide), tailored to your child's specific individual needs. The OT will provide guidance on how to implement this diet at home, as well as providing therapy sessions. Closely following these plans will maximize the vest's benefits.