THE GIFTS OF SENSITIVITY

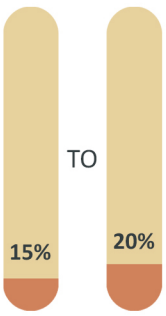
WHAT IS SENSITIVITY?

Some kids are more stirred up by the world around them through their sensory systems. They have an enhanced sensorium meaning the sensory signals can be heightened to varying degrees. Sensory overload is common with some sounds being too loud, smells too powerful, or even touch or tags too much to handle. They can have heightened reactions and emotions, and are often intense and passionate in how they express themself.

PREVALENCE

The number of sensitive kids in North America is estimated to be 15 to 20%.

Sensitive nervous and sensory systems are not just in humans either. Biologists have discovered sensitivity in other mammal species and even fruit flies. While sensitive kids can feel larger than life to take care of, what usually gets missed when development is going well, are the wonderful gifts that come with being more receptive to the world.



BECOMING YOUR SENSITIVE CHILD'S BEST BET

Sensitive kids need strong, caring, and firm parents to lean on and those who won't be afraid of their intense and passionate way of being in the world. While sensitive kids may not always be the easiest to parent, they can make amazing parents out of us.

WHEN CARING FOR A SENSITIVE CHILD ...

- We need to learn to dance with human vulnerability
- We need to provide safe spaces for emotional expression through play and words
- We need to lead them through the disappointments in life
- We need to hold onto our relationship with them

We need to convey confidence that they are strong enough to handle what lies ahead

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PERCEPTIVE

Sensitive kids often pick up on small details and notice things that are different or have changed, and can put together patterns and abstract details. To see the world through the eyes of a sensitive child is to be reintroduced to the wonder and splendor of the simple things that surround us.

CARE DEEPLY ABOUT OTHERS

With ideal development, sensitive kids are often very compassionate, empathic, and considerate as they mature. The depth of their emotions can be profound as they vocalize what they are feeling and as they are easily moved by music, stories, nature, art, and the kindness of others.

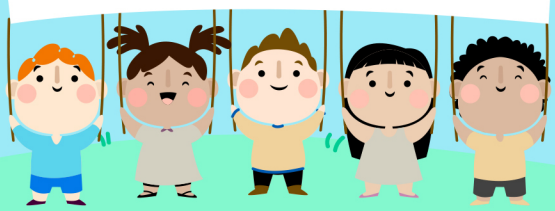
PASSIONATE AND INTENSE

Sensitive kids often have passionate and intense responses to things they are interested in and people they are in relationship with. They can become vibrant and energized talking about their ideas, with big dreams and goals ensuing.

MEMORY

With increased receptivity comes an acute attention to patterns or details, with sensitive kids absorbing and retaining information at astonishing rates. They frequently talk early as they imitate others, and can locate things you have 'misplaced' with uncanny accuracy. 'Natural brightness' is often a result of sensitivity as well as particular areas of special capabilities, for example, visual processing, reading comprehension, or agility.

TEN GIFTS OF SENSITIVITY



CREATIVITY

When sensitive kids are allowed to play freely, unconstrained by agendas or structure, their imaginative worlds can be vibrant and expansive. They often exhibit a unique capacity to create something novel out of ordinary things, and can be counted among some of our most gifted artists, writers, actors, musicians, designers, engineers, and creatives.

DISCERNING

Sensitive kids can be particular in deciding who they will trust and form relationships with. They expect a lot from their attachments and people must often prove they are psychological safe and non-wounding before a sensitive child will warm up to the relationship. Sensitive kids are less likely to succumb to false pretenses and fake performances as they are more astute at reading people's true intentions.

RESISTANT

It might not appear to be a gift on the surface but a sensitive child's capacity to resist coercion and control by others has a silver lining. While they can be quick to dig in if they feel pushed and will often push back, this does help preserve a space for their own ideas to emerge. Being prone to feeling easily coerced and quick to resist allows them to stand apart from others and avoid succumbing to peer pressure.

PROBLEM SOLVING AND INNOVATION

When a sensitive child is able to digest a lot of sensory information and hold onto all of the pieces at once, they can start to arrange them in interesting and complex ways. The capacity to find new and unique solutions comes from being able to manipulate ideas, integrate unlike objects, and form connections.

GIFTS RELATED TO THEIR SENSITIVITY

Every sensitive child exists on a continuum of heightened responses but with this can come a refinement of special skills and gifts. For children with enhanced emotional/perceptual awareness, they may pick up on, describe, and translate the world around them into feelings and emotions as seen in poetry or storytelling. For the child with auditory sensitivity, they may be able to pick up a tune and play it on a musical instrument or sing a song in perfect pitch.

THEY STRETCH PARENTS TO GROW

At times sensitive kids may feel like they are too much to care for given their heightened reactions, capacity to resist, and big alarming feelings. It is the love for a child and the feelings of responsibility that will push a parent to grow and stretch in their capacity to find patience, consideration, compassion, and self-control.