
Supporting Your Child's Preference for Sensing or Intuition

Sensing and Intuition are two fundamentally different ways people take in information. Sensing children take in information directly through the five senses; they pay attention to details and build conclusions based on the sequential organization of this information. Intuitive children are mostly aware of the meanings, connections, and possibilities related to the information they take in; they focus greater energies on reorganizing the information into patterns.



Does your child?

- ☉ Like information presented in order or like to learn different things different ways?
- ☉ Like complete directions or just enough directions to do it their own way?
- ☉ Like to know all the facts to understand the whole idea or like to know the main idea more than the details?
- ☉ Like producing things or like to come up with the idea for doing things?

Sensing Children Value Things As They Are

Sensing children tend to pay attention to and remember the sensory information they collect. They tend to like things the way they are and enjoy experiencing them in their real way.

To surprise their son, Jared, his parents decided to make-over his bedroom while he was visiting grandma for a week. Knowing he had expressed interest in wolves, they re-did the room (previously in a flowered pattern) with a wolf mural, wolf comforter, and other wolf accessories. When Jared came home he cried, cried, cried. During the night he threw the comforter onto the floor and dug out his old quilt which he continued to use even several months later. As a sensor, there was too much change without his involvement so the room lost the comfort associated with his previous room. The parents created stress for their child despite their good intentions.

Intuitive Children Seek Variety

Intuitive children are most interested in things that are out of the ordinary. They love variety, learning new things, and can become bored quickly with too much routine.

Mother Laurel talked about how she was totally exhausted from a weekend of activities including taking her daughter, Lenell, to a science fair, shopping, and eating out on Saturday. She was looking forward to a restful Sunday morning when Lenell said, "We never do anything. I'm bored." Lenell was constantly looking for new experiences and activity.

Amy, an intuitive, is constantly changing her bedroom arrangement. She likes variety and feels that there is always room for improvement.

“Here and Now” or Dreaming of Future Possibilities

Sensing (S) and intuition (N) show where we focus our attention. Sensing preference children focus on existing facts and realities while intuitives focus on future possibilities. Sensing types live in the “here and now;” intuitive types wonder what “might be” in the future. Intuitives often feel sensors are “too concrete” or “stuck in the present.” Sensing types may consider intuitives “out of touch” with reality.

Alisha has a sensing preference and takes things very literally. As a teenager, her mother sent her to the grocery store to get a 20# turkey. She was frustrated because the closest she could find was 19.36#. Using her cell phone, she called her mother who told her “close” to 20# was just fine.

An intuitive child, Bob remembers he would go into the darkened closet and see colored pictures and imaginary scenes. When his siblings and parents went into the closet they couldn’t see any of Bob’s imaginations and laughed at his “dreaming.”

Sensing types outnumber intuitives three-to-one. Sensing parents may struggle to appreciate the contribution intuitives can provide in thinking about what might develop in the future, while intuitive parents need to appreciate the ability of sensing types to focus on specifics and value the here and now.

Sensing Parent, Intuitive Child Parenting Tips

Sensing parents may struggle with appreciating an intuitive child’s imagination or the “big picture” orientation of an intuitive child. It’s important to give your child the space to dream and fantasize. Wait until later to ask about specifics and practicalities.

Intuitive children are always looking to the future rather than what they have at the



moment. Because intuitive children “live” in the future, they can be perceived as ungrateful. *On the way home from a wonderful vacation at Disney World, Jeanne and Sam’s daughter wanted to know when and where were they going on their next vacation. The sensing parents viewed their daughter as not appreciative of the vacation, but just the opposite is true. Because she liked it so much, she was already thinking about the next vacation possibilities.*

Intuitive Parent, Sensing Child Parenting Tips

Intuitive parents may struggle with giving a sensing child detailed, specific instructions or knowing how long a task will take. Break a task into components and give shorter sets of directions. Use a timer to get real-life information to share with your sensing child. Learn patience for the details your sensing child provides.

Mother Linda with a preference for intuition said she works on patience with her sensing preference son, Joel. Upon his arrival home from school, she asks him if he has homework. She works not to get exasperated when he goes through his day, class by class, to “know” if he has homework. She just wants the “bottom line” answer, but he has to think through each class to know what he has.

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