



The Processing Speed Checklist for Parents

Does your child exhibit problems in the following areas?

1. Verbal Processing

- Appears not to listen to others
- Doesn't seem to understand directions
- Can't seem to follow instructions
- Becomes overwhelmed with too much verbal information
- Needs more time to answer questions
- Even when he knows the right answer, is hesitant to give it
- Answers questions with short responses
- Does not participate in class discussions
- Has trouble retrieving factual information from memory
- Can't keep up with the pace of lectures
- Makes grammatical errors in writing
- Has problems sustaining focused attention during social activities
- Needs additional time to respond in conversations

2. Visual Processing

- Doesn't pay close attention to details
- Has difficulty proofreading work
- Makes careless errors
- Doesn't grasp the subtle, visual cues of social relationships
- Stares off into space instead
- Neglects to look at important visual information
- Omits phrases or words in writing

3. Motoric Processing

- Seems tired, even after a good night's sleep
- Seems lazy or unmotivated

(cont.)

The Processing Speed Checklist for Parents (*cont.*)

- Moves slowly on fine motor (for example, writing) or gross motor (for example, catching a ball) tasks
- Is reluctant to start tasks
- Can *do* the assignments, but not in the time allotted
- Is slow at the physical aspects of writing

4. **Academic Processing**

- Is a slow reader
- Is slow to recall basic math facts (for example, times tables)
- Has difficulty taking notes in class
- Has trouble formulating and expressing ideas in writing
- Exhibits inconsistent academic performance
- Lacks fluency when reading aloud
- Becomes distracted during academic tasks
- Makes punctuation and capitalization errors
- Makes spelling errors in writing, despite otherwise being a good speller

5. **General Problems with Processing Speed**

- Often looks confused
 - Frequently seems absentminded
 - Lacks persistence in completing any type of task
 - Avoids tasks that require sustained attention or focus
 - Generally seems to be “slow” much of the time
 - Needs extra time to complete tasks
 - Forgets information that he learned just yesterday
 - Frequently responds, “What?”
 - Starts out strong but then wanders off-task or “tunes out”
 - Impulsively rushes through tasks
 - Is hesitant to participate in social situations or conversations
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What Is *Your* Processing Speed?

Check off all of the following items that apply to you (or to another family member for whom you are filling out the form).

Visual Processing

- Don't pay close attention to details
- Don't proofread what I write (for example, e-mails, notes)
- Make careless errors
- Miss the subtle cues of social relationships
- Find myself staring into space instead of looking at important visual information
- Omit letters, words, or phrases in my writing or typing

Verbal Processing

- Find myself tuning out or not listening to others
- Don't seem to understand directions or multistep instructions
- Become overwhelmed when someone tells me too much information at one time
- Need a lot of time to make decisions or answer questions
- Am hesitant to give an answer, even when I know I am right
- Provide only short answers to questions
- Don't participate in group discussions at work
- Can't seem to remember details or recall facts like other people do
- Can't keep up with the pace of meetings and presentations
- Make grammatical errors in my writing
- Have problems sustaining focused attention during social gatherings
- Am not "quick" in conversation (for example, think of something to say after it's over)

Motor Speed

- Am tired, even when I've had a good night's sleep
- Am seen as lazy or unmotivated by others
- Move slowly

(cont.)

What Is *Your* Processing Speed? (cont.)

- Am reluctant to start tasks or projects (for example, making a family album)
- Can *do* the task, but not in the time that would be expected to get it done
- Am slow at the physical aspects of writing

Occupational/Academic Fluency

- Am, and always have been, a slow reader
- Did poorly on math drills in school and struggle to remember math facts
- Have difficulty taking notes in meetings
- Have trouble expressing my ideas in writing
- Show inconsistent performance at work (for example, 3 slow days, then 1 fast day)
- Can't read well aloud
- Become distracted at work
- Make punctuation and capitalization errors in my writing
- Make careless spelling errors in writing, despite being a good speller

General Difficulties

- Others often say I look confused
- Others complain I am absentminded
- Lack persistence in completing any type of task
- Avoid tasks that require sustained attention or focus
- Generally seem to be "slow" much of the time
- Need extra time to complete tasks
- Forget things easily, such as things told to me earlier that day
- Frequently ask, "What?"
- Start out strong but then give up
- Rush through tasks just to get them done
- Am hesitant to participate in social situations or conversations

The more symptoms you checked off, the higher the likelihood that you also experience some difficulty in processing speed.



Slow Processing Speed and Friendships: What to Look Out for at Different Ages

3 to 5 years old

- Slow to join group activities
- Has trouble getting started on an activity with a friend (for example, seeming lost when a friend comes over to play)
- Has difficulty remembering and retrieving “social information,” such as any details from a playdate or something as simple as a friend’s name
- Has trouble following along during an imaginative scenario with a friend
- Acts shy, seems quiet, or appears lost in his or her own thoughts
- Avoids playing with others in fast-paced or busy situations, such as in a crowded waiting room with many children and limited toys
- Is the “follower” during social times, frequently a step behind and/or simply copying the behaviors of other children
- Stares blankly at a friend, teacher, or parent
- Is described by preschool teachers as a “loner” or being less interactive than the other children
- Has trouble picking up on the rules of social games, such as tag or duck, duck, goose
- Engages in solitary activity (for example, looking for clovers in the field) versus playing with others
- Has trouble shifting quickly from one social activity to another (for example, slow to move from the sandbox to a sing-along in circle time)
- Has trouble responding to his or her name when it is called

6 to 12 years old

- Is chosen last by peers during organized activities (for example, kickball)
- Is slow to pick up on social cues (for example, when a friend is getting subtly annoyed)
- Has trouble remembering rules to organized games (for example, capture the flag) or missing out on key instructions

(cont.)

Slow Processing Speed and Friendships (*cont.*)

- Has difficulties telling clear and concise stories to others
- Is slow to join group activities
- Has trouble independently organizing a playdate
- Comes across as stilted or awkward during social interactions
- Seems a “beat” behind when laughing at jokes or responding to sarcasm
- Complains that certain social situations (for example, indoor playground at McDonald’s) are “too loud” or overwhelming
- Doesn’t notice when friends have arrived or left during busy social situations
- Has difficulty independently coming up with ideas of what to play with a friend
- Is described by teachers as a “wallflower” or as “not being on the same wavelength as others”
- Has trouble remembering to get information needed to set up a playdate, such as a friend’s last name or phone number
- Has difficulty coming up with what to say during small talk and social chit-chat
- “Drifts off” when others are talking quickly or presenting many ideas at once

13 years and older

- Has difficulties with group assignments due to slow speed of work completion
- Forgets to RSVP to organized parties or events
- Forgets dates and times of important social events (for example, school dance)
- Has trouble picking up on subtle social cues from friends
- Has difficulties “getting to the point” when telling a story
- Annoys others by always running late
- Has problems remembering tickets and passes for important events with friends (for example, concerts)

(*cont.*)

Slow Processing Speed and Friendships (*cont.*)

- Asks the same questions of his friends multiple times (for example, “What time are we meeting Carrie again?”)
 - Has trouble organizing group activities
 - Misreads social cues
 - Has trouble following complex stories told by friends
 - Is slow to respond to text messages and e-mails from friends
 - Misses out on social activities due to slow pace of homework/chore completion
 - Has trouble remembering information about current events and conversation topics
 - “Hangs back” at parties and other fast-paced social situations
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The Emotional Costs of Slow Processing Speed: What to Watch Out For

Check off the signs below that you see on a regular basis in your child.

Low Self-Esteem

- Is overly boastful
- Shows a pessimistic or “glass half empty” attitude
- Complains “No one likes me”
- Frequently compares him- or herself to others
- Is overly sensitive to even slight criticism
- Is embarrassed to show assignments and other projects to teachers/parents
- Seems too confident
- Cannot admit wrongdoing
- Is too hard on him- or herself
- Makes self-deprecating comments such as “I’m stupid” or “I’m not good at anything”

Depressive Symptoms

- Has sleep problems or difficulty waking up in the morning
- Seems hopeless about the future
- Has changed appetite or eating habits, eating less or more
- Acts testy and “short-fused”
- Expresses feelings of sadness
- Is overly tearful
- Behaves aggressively and defiantly at home
- No longer seems interested in activities and events formerly favored
- Withdraws from friends and family members
- Complains of difficulties concentrating at school
- Seems overreactive to little things

(cont.)

The Emotional Costs of Slow Processing Speed (*cont.*)

- Has trouble getting motivated and shows extreme procrastination
- Complains of stomachaches, headaches, or other aches and pains
- Seems slowed down and lethargic

Anxiety Symptoms

- Seems overconcerned about abilities and performance
 - Demonstrates excessive worry, even over small things
 - Likes things to be predictable and has trouble with change
 - Seems uncomfortable meeting new people
 - Has multiple fears
 - Refuses to go to school
 - Complains of stomachaches and headaches
 - Has trouble being away from parents
 - Worries about death and harm befalling family members
 - Has trouble speaking up in class
 - Experiences repetitive and uncontrollable thoughts and behaviors (for example, counting things over and over)
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