

Oral sensory activities

Please note that the following are general activity ideas which may not be suitable for and/or appeal to all children (dependant on age, developmental level etc), so please use your discretion in choosing activities which you think are suitable and which your child will enjoy. If your child is regularly mouthing/ biting down on non-food objects, appears overly sensitive/ or seeks out sensation in the face and mouth region, try any of the following, if your child is happy for you to do so:

- Try using oral massagers, vibration, and textured materials/objects for gentle face stimulation – use the following order for stimulation; start on face with cheeks, jaw then lips– only proceed if child is happy with this process
- Wash and wipe the child's face often during eating with different textured materials (i.e. baby washcloth, napkin, regular washcloth, paper towel with texture to it)
- When doing the above, use a combination of relaxing input (deep pressure, firm touch) and stimulating input (light, quick strokes)
- If your child likes to bite down/ mouth/ chew on non-food objects provide a suitable chewy toy – such as ones found at <http://shop.sensory-smart.com/child-bangles-89-c.asp>
- Try encouraging your child to suck on ice lollies – if worried about sugar intake you could make your own ice lollies from watered down fruit juice. You could try providing a drink in a sports bottle so your child has to suck through the straw – this will be a calming type of sensation.
- Try encouraging your child to suck thick liquids – such as milkshakes or smoothies – through a straw.
- Play games which involve blowing through the lips – such as blowing bubbles, whistles, keeping a balloon/feather/bubbles in the air, blowing on blowpens, harmonicas, pinwheels, kazoos, recorders.
- Encourage your child to take different sized bites and have them "feel" the food in their mouth (if able and appropriate have them close their eyes and play guessing games with the food)