

### **Activities to help reduce tactile sensitivity**

- Give the child lots and lots of **proprioceptive** activities throughout his/ her day. This means gently squeezing and massaging feet, legs, hands and arms, for example, particularly just prior to dressing or anything the child finds uncomfortable. These kinds of activities will help ‘turn down’ the sensitivity in the child’s skin/ body
- Your child may cope better with clothing which ‘hugs’ them, rather than loose fitting items which move around on their skin. Try experimenting with more snug garments made of soft, stretchy materials, and try to avoid seams. Specialised clothing can be found at <http://sensorysmart.co.uk/> or you could try Lycra type sports clothing.
- When handling your little one try to avoid light/ tickly touch, instead try to use gentle but firm pressure and, if your child likes it, try holding him/ her snugly, for example by cuddling their knees up towards their chest and bringing their arms in over their chest while you hold them
- When moving position, for example, from being in your arms to being down on the floor, move slowly and provide your body for support until he/she is happily settled on the floor – in other words, avoid sudden swooping or lurching movements where child is suddenly placed in a new position – give your child time to adjust to the new position i.e. avoid ‘plonking’ him/her down and then withdrawing physically
- Play in a variety of media (e.g. dry sand, wet sand, water, squirty cream, custard etc. ). If child is not happy with his/ her skin touching, try using utensils or gloves so that he/she can explore the textures in a way that feels ‘safe’. Also try putting messy things in ziplock bags, or a small amount on a table with a piece of clingfilm over the top, so the child can ‘squidge’ and explore without actually getting anything on his/ her hands. The idea is to gradually build up the child’s tolerance so start wherever the child is comfortable and build from there
- Encourage your child to get messy with his/ her food. Try placing different things in their own separate bowls so that the child can explore in a way that feels safe to him/her. Again, start where a child is comfortable and build from there –the aim is for the child to show any kind of interest in the newly introduced food – looking, poking with a finger or utensil may be all a child is comfortable doing to begin with