

## **Heavy Work Activities List For Nursery/ Reception Teachers**

Heavy work activities involving resistance (pushing, pulling, lifting etc.,) provide proprioceptive input and help us to feel 'grounded', having a regulating effect on our nervous system. Proprioception refers to the unconscious sensations from joints and muscles which gives us awareness of body position and force of movement.

Following are activities school teams can use to provide heavy work activities for students. All the activities on this handout are "naturally occurring activities". This means they can be easily incorporated into the student's daily routine within the school environment. These activities are most beneficial when completed on a regular basis throughout the day.

1. Erase the chalkboard/dry erase board
2. Wash desks and/or chalkboard/dry erase board (for example after an art project)
3. Help with general caretaking activities such as emptying wastebaskets, sweeping the floor, wiping the tables etc.
4. Fill boxes (small ones that children can carry) with books to carry from one end of the room to the other i.e. "Can you help me move this box over there?"  
Teachers could ask students to move these boxes back and forth as needed.
5. Sharpen pencils with a manual sharpener
6. Cut out items for display from thin card (card gives more resistance than paper)
7. Carry appropriately heavy notebooks to the office or from class to class
8. Carry books with both hands hugging the book to the chest
9. Climb on playground equipment
10. Swing from the trapeze bar
11. Push against a wall. In nursery you can use the idea that "the room feels small this morning". "Can everyone help me push the walls out to make the room bigger?"
12. Fill up big toy trucks with heavy blocks, push with both hands to knock things down
13. Have the child colour a "rainbow" with large paper on the floor while on hands and knees
14. Play "cars" under a table in the classroom where the child pushes the car with one hand while creeping and weight bearing on the other hand
15. Open doors for people
16. Use squeeze/ fidget toys that can be squeezed quietly. Choose things that are resistive and firm to the touch
17. 'Row, row, row your boat' slowly using a piece of hose or rope with adult providing a little resistance to make child pull firmly and steadily. If child is happy to, adult could press feet against child's for extra proprioception while playing this game

18. Multi-sensory play – use rolling pins to roll out play-doh, squash and squeeze play-doh flat using hands and/ or shape cutters. Use buckets and containers to fill and pour with sand/ water etc.
19. Do chair push-ups
20. Do animal walks (crab walk, bear walk, army crawl)
21. Jump on a mini trampoline
22. Take isometric exercise breaks i.e. to the slow count of 3, complete maybe two or three of the following exercises as a whole class: clasp and squeeze hands together, sit on hands and straighten arms, squeeze knees alternately to chest, interlock fingers and press firmly down on head, stand up and lean onto table through hands and straight arms, squeeze hands tightly shut then open them back up like stars and lemons