

### **Sensory ideas for home**

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. These activities are most beneficial when completed on a regular basis throughout the day.

Pick and choose activities which fit in with daily routine and have fun!!

- slow, steady, rhythmic, repeated, predictable input.
- slow and rhythmic music
- firm, steady, pressure touch or squeezing (think massage or a big hug)
- using muscles for "heavy work"
- bland or sweet-tasting flavours
- slow-moving, dim, deep colours for visuals
- neutral warmth
- slow linear movements forward-and-back or head-to-toe

Activities and Strategies:

- Rhythmic bouncing on a space hopper or seated on therapy/exercise ball.
- Rocking horse or see-saw, pushing off hard with legs
- Jumping on a trampoline, doing jumping jacks, or jumping over a skipping rope
- Riding a bike up hills (pedalling against resistance)
- Pushing or pulling heavy furniture; putting chairs on desks & taking down
- Carrying a stack of books, laundry, groceries, or something else approx. 5% of body weight
- Carry backpack with some weight to it (not more than 5% of body weight)
- Push on wall as if to move wall.
- Go to the park as often as possible.
- Go for walks together (preferable up hills and over uneven surfaces).
- Hold self above chair seat, weight-bearing through arms, hands to side of seat for "chair push-up".
- Weight-bearing through arms via wheelbarrow walk, crabwalk, bearwalk, etc.
- Isometrics: push hands together, hook hands and pull apart, push knee against hand, etc.
- Tug'o'war, wrestling, push'o'war (sitting back-to-back or pushing palms to palm).
- Push with feet against something (push'o'war with a pillow between 2 peoples' feet, no shoes)
- Push or pull open and hold open heavy doors.
- Help to wash and polish the car.
- Try wearing lycra clothing, like bike shorts or long underwear (can wear either under alone or under regular clothes)
- Use a heavy/weighted blanket; read or work lying on floor with pillows stacked on top.
- Wrap or roll-up in blanket or rug – play the hot dog game where you provide firm pressure to their body when they are wrapped up (to add the ketchup, cheese, onions etc).
- Have an adult roll an exercise ball over body while lying on mat or rug.

- Squeeze stress ball or other resistive “fidget toy” (putty, beeswax, art erasers)
- Put hands into container of beans or rice and try to find hidden small toys.
- Safe crashing: jump or fall into pile of pillows or mats; pillow fighting.
- Wheelbarrow walking or races.
- Donkey Kicks
- ABC Push-ups (Push-up plank position, touch chest with hand and say a letter of the alphabet, all the way up to the letter Z. Each letter said, your child changes the hand that touches the chest)
- Bear walk.
- Crab walk.
- Play leapfrog.
- Lie on stomach on floor to watch television, read, or play games.
- Take the cushions off the settee and hide under them.
- Do gardening activities – digging, pushing a wheelbarrow, collect up leaves etc.
- Hammer ice cubes in a plastic bag (then use them in your drink)!
- Hanging from a chin-up bar/monkey bar.
- Climb climbing frame, cargo net etc.
- Hopscotch
- Tickle fight
- Drumming – could be on pots and pans!
- Wiping the counters or table after tea
- Sweeping and dusting
- Unloading the washing machine and the dryer
- Taking out the rubbish
- Catch with different texture or weight objects including water balloon, soft toys, beanbags etc.
- Hang upside down – on swing or hanging head off side of settee.
- Make a ‘sandwich’ by pressing down on him between two pillows or couch cushions.
- Go on a texture walk.
- Re-pot the plants
- Build a fort or tent.
- Give each other massages.
- Gymnastics, trampolining, martial arts, swimming, indoor rock climbing, swimming, horse-riding, dance or other movement based activities that could be considered.

### **Oral Sensory ideas**

The mouth has extensive sensory nerve endings and is one of the primary areas for tactile discrimination. Heavy work to the mouth can be calming, so incorporate these activities frequently during the day.

- Use a vibrating toothbrush or hold a vibrating toy against the cheeks.
- Practice chewing gum and blowing bubbles
- Use crazy straws or thin straws
- Blow whistles or musical instruments
- Make and blow pinwheels
- Play football by blowing a cotton ball across the table scoring if you can blow it off the other person's end.
- Make bubble mountains in a bowl with a straw and soapy water
- Blow gently on each other's faces (see who can blow the longest)

- Make extreme faces
- Eat chewy foods (send fruit roll-ups, bagels, cereal bar, liquorice dried fruit, cheese, gummy sweets with lunch/break)
- Eat crunchy foods – raw vegetables, fruit such as apples, bread sticks, dry cereal, crisps, Nuts, crackers or popcorn.
- Use a drinks bottle with a built-in straw.
- Use a straw to drink yoghurt, fruit puree or fruit smoothies.
- Suck sweets, lollipops, frozen fruit or ice cubes.

**Chew objects**

Objects designed specifically to provide sensory input are available and may help your child to concentrate, reduce sensitivity and enable him to cope with the sensory demands of life more easily. This is not an exhaustive list but does give ideas for some of the chew toys available to provide an acceptable way to chew. Try searching other suppliers on internet.

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Sensory-University-PENCIL-TOPPERS/dp/B003LRIDYE>

<http://www.cheapdisabilityaids.co.uk/sensachew-pencil-chew-topper-5433-p.asp>

<http://www.cheapdisabilityaids.co.uk/special-needs-chew-toys-36-c.asp>

<http://www.chewigem.co.uk/>