



Tips and Tricks for Sensory & Movement Activities

Heavy Work Activities

- Erase or wash the chalkboard
- Wipe desks or tabletops
- Carry a box of books
- Push or stack chairs
- Rearrange bookshelves
- Open doors for others
- Staple paper onto the bulletin board
- Sharpen pencils with a manual sharpener
- Wear heavy backpack
- Move trash can to another location
- Carry basket of items
- Make deliveries to the office
- Squeeze stress balls or fidget toys
- Cut heavy paper or cardboard with scissors

Movement Activities

- Sit in a rocking chair when reading or during floor time
- Sit on an inflated air cushion placed on a chair or floor
- Hand out papers and materials for the teacher
- Push your feet into theraband placed around chair legs
- Do head, neck and shoulder rolls while sitting
- Take a stretch break after sitting for a long time
- Breath deeply- in through your nose/out through your mouth

Weight Bearing Activities

- Wall push ups and Chair Pushups
- Wheelbarrow walk
- Push on desktop or table top
- Crab walk, Spider walk
- Wall slides
- Crush paper into a tight ball
- Bounce on a therapy ball and Jump on a mini-trampoline



Oral Motor Exercise with these mouth tools:

Chew necklace

Chew on gum or, if allowed

Chew on licorice or twizzlers

Sip water through a sports bottle

Suck on hard candy or lollipops

crunchy foods- Dutch pretzels or carrots

Mints make us more alert!

Also remember to

Ask your school OT for equipment to try such as a weighted vest or ball chair

Take movement or stretch breaks throughout the day





Tips and Tricks for Organizing Sensory Input for the Classroom

Environment:

Children with sensory integration difficulties can easily become overwhelmed by extraneous visual and auditory input. By changing the classroom environment, you can maximize children's ability to remain focused and organized.

- Limit the amount of extraneous visual material you have hanging from the ceiling and on the walls.
 - Store fine motor and math manipulatives inside plastic containers or cubbies.
 - have an organized and labeled place where they belong.

Help desk organization with a picture template of where each item belongs inside the desk.

- Limit extraneous auditory input from the hallway by closing your classroom door. Seat the child who has sensory sensitivities and distractibility away from open windows and doors.

As much as possible, prepare the child who is sensitive to noise for clean-up bells, fire drills, and morning announcements.

Schedule:

Children benefit from a predictable schedule.

- Each morning, outline the schedule for the day with the class.
 - Highlight any changes from the typical routine that will occur that day.
- Discuss or create a "story" about unexpected events before they occur (e.g., fire drills or assemblies) to help children prepare for these potentially overwhelming situations.
- Help younger children make transitions between activities by creating a "clean-up" song or "new game" song.

Tips and Tricks for Classroom Management from OT perspective

Tactile: For the student who experiences sensitivity to touch (tactile defensiveness), allow the child to stand at the end of the line and arrange the classroom seating to minimize the risk of being jostled or bumped by classmates (i.e., have the child's desk either near the teacher or at the back of the room).

Tactile: When planning an art activity, modifications to the activity may need to be made to accommodate the child who is sensitive to touch. Be aware that materials such as glue, finger paints, clay, paper maché, etc. may cause the child to have an aversive response. Using tools (i.e., hammer, paint brush, etc.) may help child participate more fully.

Auditory : For the student who becomes over-stimulated by the environment, provide quiet, "time out" spaces to help the child regroup and become organized (e.g., a reading corner behind a bookshelf, under a table with pillows or bean bag chair in a quiet corner).

Auditory: Forewarn the child of any loud noises before they occur (e.g., bells or alarms).

- To minimize auditory distractions, a classroom with a rug or carpet would help decrease extraneous noises.

Fidgety: To decrease fidgeting at the desk and promote improved postural adjustments, allow the student to stand at the desk or to work on the floor in a prone-on-elbows position (on stomach).

A bungee cord or Theraband/ elestac band wrapped around chair legs provides sensory input to assist child in remaining seated longer.

- Using a partially inflated air pillow (stadium seat) may help increase postural control by increasing sensory feedback in sitting.
- Allow the child to become a teacher's assistant and pass out papers so he is able to walk around the room appropriately with a goal-directed task.

Proprioception: To increase postural muscle strength and endurance: swinging, jungle gyms, rope-climbing, calisthenics, pulling/pushing a wagon, carrying weighted objects, scooter boards in prone lying positions, and wheelbarrow walking are

Grips: Use of a molded pencil grip will provide a larger surface for grasp to improve written refinement (i.e., large markers, primary pencils, DLM grips, Stetson grips, bulb grips and "the pencil grip").

Tactile: Use activities that involve tactile/kinesthetic awareness to reinforce writing skills such as drawing large letters in the air or on a chalkboard, writing in Play-Doh or shaving cream, or practicing writing with eyes closed. Teach or review letter formation, beginning large and gradually reducing size.

Writing: Provide primary-lined paper or draw dotted guidelines on lined paper to help with spacing. Older students can be reminded to draw in their own guidelines with a ruler.

Bilateral Skills: Remind child to use their non-preferred hand or provide a clipboard to stabilize paper.

Practice visual-motor skills by drawing with shapes and letters. Make sample drawings larger if necessary and provide step-by-step instruction. Check on www.steps2success.com

Tips and Tricks for Motor Planning and Organization

Motor Planning is the ability to organize and sequence novel activities and affects the child's independence in self-help skills and motor development.

Children with difficulty in motor planning, give simple step-by-step directions.

Help the child identify the steps needed to accomplish the task first. Demonstrate or ask another student to model the motor activity, then ask the child to try.

Present directions for new activities in child's best modality: visual, auditory, or multi-sensory to facilitate learning. Use modeling, demonstration and repetition as necessary. Monitor the child to be sure the information is understood and the task initiated.

Use a consistent approach to teaching the child a new skill. Allow time for practice. It may take a child with motor planning delays much more time to "polish" a new skill.

Help the student plan out a task by asking questions such as "What materials do you need?" "What do you do first?"

Set up any variety of activities in an obstacle course. Begin simply and increase the complexity as the student is able to handle the tasks. Also, "Simon Says" or sequencing games are great for motor planning.

For the child who has difficulty formulating ideas for projects or assignments, provide several suggestions or create a brainstorming session among a peer group.

To prepare the child for transitions, use a timer or warn ahead of time to identify when it is time to change activities.

Help the child develop organizational skills by having a consistent place to store materials once he/she has completed a task.

A child with motor planning difficulties may need assistance to recognize and improve on performance/work that is not accurate.

Using pictures or a list written on the blackboard to order the day's activities will help the child with sequencing difficulties organize the day for smoother transitions.

Tips and Tricks to identify Tactile Dysfunction

Sensitive to light touch sensations, exhibiting anxiety, hostility, or aggression. Child may withdraw from light touch, scratching or rubbing the place that has been touched. As an infant, Child may have rejected cuddling as a source of pleasure or calming.

sensitive to the possibility of light touch. He may appear irritable or fearful when others are close, as when lining up.

sensitive when approached from the rear, or when touch is out of his field of vision, such as when someone's foot grazes his under a blanket or table. The child may reject touch altogether from anyone except his mother (or primary caregiver).

Prefer receiving a hug to a kiss. Child may crave the deep touch pressure of a hug, but try to rub off the irritating light touch of a kiss. Overreact to physically painful experiences, making a "big deal" over a minor scrape or a splinter. The child may remember and talk about such experiences for days.

React similarly to dissimilar touch sensations. A raindrop on his skin may cause as adverse a reaction as a thorn.

Avoid touching certain textures or surfaces, like some fabrics, blankets, rugs, or stuffed animals.

Fuss about clothing, such as stiff new clothes, rough textures, shirt collars, turtle-necks, belts, elasticized waists, hats and scarves.

Fuss about footwear, particularly sock seams. He may refuse to wear socks. He may complain about shoe laces. He may insist upon wearing beach sandals on cold, wet, winter days, or heavy boots on hot summer days.

Prefer short sleeves and shorts and refuse to wear hats and mittens, even in winter, to avoid the sensation of clothes rubbing on his skin.

Prefer long sleeves and pants and insist on wearing hats and mittens, even in summer, to avoid having his skin exposed.

Sensitive being touched on the face or head, such as having his face washed.
Sensitive to baths, or insist that bath water be extremely hot or cold.

Dislike having his fingernails trimmed.
Avoid messy play, such as sand, finger paint, paste, glue, mud, and clay.

Tips and Tricks to recognize Poor Tactile Discrimination:

Seems out of touch with his hands, as if they are unfamiliar appendages.

Be unable to identify which body parts have been touched without looking.

Be unable to perform certain motor tasks without visual cues, such as zipping, buttoning and unbuttoning clothes.

Be a messy dresser, with shoes untied and waistband twisted

Put on gloves or socks in unusual ways.

Difficulty holding and using tools, such as crayons, scissors and forks.

Avoid initiating tactile experiences that are attractive to others, such as picking up toys and tools.

- Need to touch repeatedly those surfaces and textures that provide soothing and comforting tactile experiences, such as a favorite blanket.
 - Seem compelled to touch certain surfaces and textures that cause other people discomfort, in order to receive strong tactile information.
 - Need to touch and feel everything in sight (e.g., bumping and touching others, running hands over furniture and walls, and handling items that other children understand are not to be touched).
 - Seek certain messy experiences, often for long durations.
 - Rub or even bite his own skin excessively.
 - Enjoy vibration or movement that provides strong sensory feedback.
 - Prefer extra-spicy or excessively sweet foods.
 - Use his mouth to investigate objects, even after the age of two (The mouth provides more intense information than hands).
 - Have trouble perceiving the physical properties of objects, such as their texture, shape, size, temperature, or density.
 - Be unable to identify familiar objects solely through touch, needing the additional help of vision (e.g., when reaching for objects in a pocket, box, or desk).
 - Prefer standing to sitting to ensure visual control of his surroundings.
- The child with poor body awareness may:
- Not know where his body parts are or how they relate to one another.
 - Have trouble orienting his arms and hands, legs, and feet to get dressed.

Tips and Tricks to recognize Vestibular Dysfunction

Dislike playground activities, such as swinging, spinning, and sliding.

Be cautious, slow-moving, and sedentary, hesitating to take risks.

Be very uncomfortable in elevators and on escalators, perhaps experiencing car or motion sickness.

Demand continual physical support from a trusted adult.

Tips and Tricks to recognize Gravitational insecurity

Have a great fear of falling, even where no real danger exists.

Be fearful of heights, even slightly raised surfaces. The child may avoid walking on a curb or jumping down from the bottom step.

Become anxious when her feet leave the ground, feeling that even the smallest movement will throw her into outer space.

Be fearful of climbing or descending stairs, and hold tightly to the banister.

Feel threatened when her head is inverted, upside-down, or tilted, as when having her head shampooed over the sink.

Be fearful when moved, as when a teacher slides the child's chair closer to a table.

Tips and Tricks for recognizing auditory-language processing

Appears unaware of the source of sounds and may look all around to locate where the sounds come from.

Have trouble identifying voices or discriminating between sounds, such as the difference between "bear" and "bore."

unable to pay attention to one voice or sound without being distracted by other sounds.

distressed by noises that are loud, sudden, metallic, or high-pitched, or by sounds that don't bother others.

Difficulty attending to, understanding, or remembering what she reads or hears.

She may misinterpret requests, frequently ask for repetition, and be able to follow only one or two instructions in sequence.

- Look to others before responding.
- Have trouble putting thoughts into spoken or written words.
- Talk "off topic," e.g., talk about her new shirt when others are discussing a soccer game.
- Have trouble "closing circles of communication," (i.e., responding to others' questions and comments).
 - Have trouble correcting or revising what she has said to be understood
- Have a weak vocabulary and use immature sentence structure (poor grammar and syntax).
 - Have difficulty with reading (dyslexia), especially out loud.
 - Have trouble making up rhymes and singing in tune.
 - Have difficulty speaking and articulating clearly.
- Improve her speaking ability after she experiences intense movement.

Tips and Tricks to recognize emotionally insecure child

Get easily frustrated and give up quickly.

Be reluctant to try new activities.

Have a low tolerance for potentially stressful situations.

Have low self-esteem.

Be irritable in others' company and avoid or withdraw from people.

difficulty making friends and relating to peers.

- Avoid participation in ordinary movement experiences, claiming to feel uncomfortable.
 - Become rigid, sticking to the activities that he has mastered and resisting new physical challenges.
 - Lack self-confidence, saying, "I can't do that," even before trying.
- Become timid in unfamiliar situations.

Tips and Tricks for recognizing The hyposensitive child who seeks constant movement

Need to keep moving, as much as possible, in order to function. The child may have trouble sitting still or staying in a seat.

Repeatedly and vigorously shake her head, rock back and forth, and jump up and down.

Crave intense movement experiences, such as bouncing on furniture, using a rocking chair, turning in a swivel chair, assuming upside-down positions, or placing her head on the floor and pivoting around it.

Be a "thrill seeker," enjoying fast-moving or spinning playground equipment, or seeking the fast and "scary" rides at an amusement park.

- Not get dizzy, even after twirling in circles or spinning rapidly for a lengthy amount

Tips and Tricks to recognize postural instability

- Have poor posture.

- Lean his head on his hands when he works at a desk.

- Slump in a chair, over a table, or while seated on the floor.

- Sit on the edge of the chair and keep one foot on the floor for extra stability.

Be unable to keep his balance while standing on one foot.