



Sensory Activities at Home!

Our home environments can provide children with opportunities to build on self regulation skills and enjoy sensory experiences using various household items.

Calming Activities

- Yoga or meditation
- Build a blanket fort
- Squeezes (squeeze hands together, self hug, or ask for a hug from a caregiver)
- Gentle rocking or swinging (in a rocking chair, hammock, swing or large blanket)
- Blowing bubbles
- Make a Glitter bottle (Mix water, glitter, glue and food colouring into a bottle)

Touch (Tactile) Activities

- Finger painting
- Make homemade slime or dough
- Play with shaving cream on a mirror
- Play with play-doh or clay to make shapes, letters, animals, etc.
- DIY stress ball (fill a balloon with flour, rice or dried beans)
- Use sidewalk chalk
- Play in a sand box
- Help plant flowers in the garden

Movement (Proprioceptive) Activities

- Go for a hike/walk
- Roll up in a blanket and then unroll
- Wheelbarrow walking races
- Throw, catch and kick a ball or balloon
- Pretend to be animals!
- Running Races or chase games
- Batting with balloons
- Crash into a mountain of pillows, mattresses or blankets

Alerting Activities

- Playing or learning in visually stimulating rooms
- Run- use tag games, hide and seek
- Play with cause and effect toys with lights and sounds
- Jumping up and down or on a trampoline
- Dancing to music and clap your hands, snap your fingers or stomp your feet!

Listening (Auditory) Activities

- Spring time sounds: birds chirping, rain falling, dogs barking, bees buzzing, thunder rumbling
- Calm instrumental or background music
- Alerting: Play loud, fast music
- Use music, including singing instructions
- Provide headphones to block out noises that some children find distracting

Balance (Vestibular) Activities

- Create an obstacle course (using pillows, couch cushions, pool noodles)
- GoNoodle.com
- Use a rocking chair and/or alternative seating (lying on the floor, sitting on pillows, kneeling, or standing)
- Work at a stand-up easel or on a wall
- Engage in dancing or movement activities to specific songs or music
- Walking/crawling on pillows or couch cushions (e.g. Floor is Lava game)



Smell (Olfactory) Activities

- **Spring time scents: fresh cut grass, flowers, rain falling, dirt**
- **Calming scents: lavender, vanilla, fresh linen**
- **Alerting scents: perfume, peppermint**
- **Be aware of the scents of household cleaning products**
- **Find items around the house with a parent's smell; this can be very comforting to a child**

Taste (Gustatory) Activities

- **Calming: using a straw or water bottle with a mouth piece**
- **Alerting tastes: cold water, cold food items (e.g. popsicles), and crunchy foods (e.g. pretzels, apples, celery and carrot sticks)**
- **Chew gum or suck on mints (if safe to do so)**
- **Make necklaces using Fruit-Loops or Cheerios on a string**

Visual Activities:

- **Play with toys that light up and multi-colored**
- **Decrease visual input by wearing a hat or sunglasses**
- **Scoop and pour sand, flour or water in a large container to make a miniature sand/water table**
- **Read books that have multi-colored pictures and backgrounds to increase visual attention**

*Everyone takes in sensory information differently and some activities may be more enjoyable to some students than other.

Some students may need more or less specific sensory input to help them regulate during a task and throughout the day.

For questions or concerns about specific sensory activities or behaviors, please contact your divisional occupational therapist*

Adapted from: University of Pittsburgh, Department of Occupational Therapy "Ten Calming Activities for Kids" & "Activities for Sensory Play", GrowingHandsOnKids "Spring Sense Scavenger Hunt", Building Bridges Through Sensory Integration (2015), The Inspired Treehouse