



OT Time!

Sensory Strategies



Different types of activities can help with different types of sensory modulation difficulties:

- Seeking/craving, over-responsiveness, under responsiveness

Heavy Work activities often help those with sensory *seeking/craving* behaviors, can have a calming or alerting effect

Sensory Calming activities typically help those with sensory *over-responsive* or sensory *seeking/craving* behaviors.

Sensory Alerting activities usually help those with sensory *under-responsive* behaviors.

Give these activities a try at home to aid in your child's self-regulation!

Heavy Work Activities

- Helping in kitchen
 - Mix/stir
 - Roll out dough
 - Gather supplies
 - Wipe down table
- Daily chores
 - Take out trash
 - Carry grocery bags
 - Vacuum/dust
- Weighted blankets
- Spandex (tight fitted clothes)
- Read a book in a bean bag chair
- Jump on a trampoline
- Ride a bike with a helmet
- Push/pull a loaded wagon
- Swings and playground equipment (monkey bars)
- Bean bag squishes
- Throw/catch heavy items
- Fidget toys (squeeze ball/putty)
- Eating crunchy, chewy foods
- Sliding
- Rolling down a hill

Many of these activities can be a naturally occurring part of your child's day. The activity itself should be short (**5-10 minutes**), occurring every **1 1/2 - 2 hours**.

Sensory Calming Activities

- Noise cancelling headphones
- Dim lighting
- Warm bath
- Deep pressure, such as bear hugs and massages
- Weighted blankets or stuffed animals
- Stretching
- Slow, rhythmic movements (i.e., rocking chair)
- Smelling "calm" smells (i.e., vanilla)
- Sucking through straws
- Laying in a bean bag chair
- Squeezing a stress ball or playdough
- Hiding in a fort
- Fidget toys
- Joint compression activities (i.e., finger pulling)
- White noise or quiet music with a steady beat
- Sensory "calming" bottles
- Yoga

Check out our "Sensory Tools" board on the ACES Extension Therapy Services **Pinterest** page for more ideas! 
Search: [acesets](#)



Sensory Alerting Activities

- Cold drinks
- Crunchy and/or sour foods
- Bright lighting
- Loud, fast-paced music
- Movement activities (i.e., jumping, running, climbing)
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Bouncing on a therapy ball
- Controlled spinning
- Walking on an uneven surface
- Vibrations on the arm, hand, or back
- Playing with messy textures

REMEMBER:

Every child is different! What may work for one child may not work for another. It is important to trial *several* strategies in order to find what works best for your child. Do not become discouraged if a specific strategy does not help!

Specific questions or comments?
Contact your school's occupational therapist!

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