

Activities to Help Students Who Have Sensory Processing Disorders

Sensory Processing Disorders (SPD)

Students who have difficulty performing in school due to Sensory Processing Disorders will often benefit from three types of activities:

- Allowing them to experience some movement while they are in class often enables them to better attend to the teacher
- Providing them with activities that encourage “heavy work” from the muscles and joints is also helpful. This type of activity provides input to the muscle fibers and joint sensory receptors and tends to be calming and organizing and also leads to better attention and function.
- Providing deep pressure through weighted items is also calming and organizing to the child’s sensory system.

The items included in this bin will provide the above mentioned sensory input, and your teachers can use these items with students who have questionable SPD. The occupational therapist in your school can also provide consultation on these issues and can perform a screening or evaluation on the student if concerns persist.

Use of Items in Bin

Inflatable cushion – This promotes “active sitting” and allows the child to experience some subtle movement. It is placed on the child’s seat, and the child sits on top of it. The degree of inflation can be adjusted with a standard bicycle pump to meet the preference of different students. This can be purchased from Best Priced Products at www.bpp2.com.

Putty – This allows the child to experience heavy work with the fingers and hands. Students who are allowed some time to play with this during down time will often show improved attention, organization and stronger fine motor skills. This can be purchased from Best Priced Products at www.bpp2.com.

Therapy Band- A loop of this can be tied around the front legs of the child’s classroom chair to allow him to push against it with his legs. This allows for “heavy work” sensory

input and can help to improve attention. This can be purchased from Best Priced Products at www.bpp2.com.

Chewy Tubing – This can be provided for the child who exhibits excess need to chew on items. It provides resistance and encourages “heavy work activity” from the muscles and joints of the mouth and face. Cut 3 to 4 inches out of the tubing and put on top of the pencil. This creates a chewy pencil topper. This can be purchased from super Duper Publications at www.superduperinc.com.

Weighted Lap Pad – This custom made lap pad is placed over the child’s lap for up to 20 minutes when the child is sitting. It provides deep pressure input that is calming and organizing to the child. These can be purchased from www.therapyshoppe.com.

Fidget Tools – These toys allow the child to experience movement and resistive input (“heavy work”) with the hands and fingers. They can be purchased reasonable in most dollar stores and in a variety of toy catalogs. Some good options are available from the Therapy Shoppe at www.therapyshoppe.com.

PTS Pre-Referral Intervention Manuals

The *OT Pre-Referral Intervention Manual* that has been provided to your school includes further information about and suggestions for classroom sensory activities that may be helpful to a student. Your school’s OT is also happy to help provide further information.