

SENSORY CALMING ACTIVITIES

Most helpful during

- Transitions
- Stressful Situations
- Bedtime
- After School
- When Overly Excited

Visual



- Low or dim lighting; avoid bright or flashing lights.
- A book in a quiet place.
- Reduce visual distractions: neutral walls and objects
- Sunglasses to reduce glare.
- Wearing a visor or baseball hat to reduce visual distractions.

Auditory



- Use calm voices with low, even tones.
- Quiet or melodic (environmental sounds, classical, new age)
- White noise from radio static, vacuum cleaner, fan, music
- Minimize auditory distractions.
- Allow use of headphones to block sound

Touch



- In general, firm pressure is more calming than light pressure touch (e.g., deep pressure massage, or slowly rolling a therapy ball on the child's back who is lying on his stomach on the floor).
- Avoid unexpected touch; communicate to the child before touching; if possible avoid touching the child from behind.
- Joint Compression - assure joints are in correct alignment. Ask for guidance from OT prior to performing
- Lotion Rubs

Movement



- Slow, rhythmical and repetitive is relaxing; slow rocking in a rocking chair, gentle swinging in a hammock or on a glider swing, sitting/lying on a water bed.
- Lying prone over a large therapy ball while being rocked side to side or forward and back.
- Use a scooter board.
- Animal walks - crab walk, leap frog, bear walk, army crawl.
- Yardwork - pushing dirt, carrying bags of soil, watering plants.
- Household tasks - mopping, vacuuming, washing window or car.

Vibration



- Use of a battery-operated massager to arms and legs (may be relaxing to some children but not to others.) Watch child carefully.
- Vibrating pillows for stress or aversive reaction
- allow child to use electric toothbrush

Observe the child carefully to see if these activities are calming or facilitatory.

- Chewing gum, crushed ice, frozen bananas, crunchy foods
- Jumping on trampoline, jumping into cushions
- Wearing ace bandage (wraps). Avoid wrapping so tightly as to cut off circulation
- Deep breathing exercises
- Push ups, sit ups, somersaults (an upside-down head position is calming for some children)
- Pillow sandwich
- Allowing child to sear backpack filled with books/toys
- In the winter, having children play outside while wearing all necessary winter clothing gear can be a proprioceptive and heavy work activity.
- Sensory hideout - small tent, pillows, blankets, stuffed animals, etc.
- Use of weighted products - blankets, compression vests, bottled water, carrying groceries.
- Push and pulling games - tug-of-war, therapy balls, push friends in laundry baskets.

Proprioceptive

