

SENSORY DIET FOR HOME

The sensory diet, a term coined by OT Patricia Wilbarger, is a carefully designed, personalized activity schedule that provides the sensory input a person's nervous system needs to stay focused and organized throughout the day. A person whose nervous system is on "high alert" will need more calming input, while someone who is more "sluggish" will need more arousing input to get going. Infants, young children, teens, and adults can all benefit from a well-designed sensory diet.

 IN THE MORNING	 SCHOOL	 AFTER SCHOOL	 AT DINNERTIME	 AT NIGHT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massage feet and back to help wake up • Listen to a calming or upbeat CD (no words preferably) • Use vibrating toothbrush and/or vibrating hairbrush • Crunchy cereal with fruit and some protein, sit on a bumpy disk or cushion at the table while eating. • Deep pressure input (Proprioception - See below) • Jump on mini-trampoline or specified 'jumping cushion' as directed • Give a picture schedule or just outline the activities of the day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic movement breaks throughout his day. Make them specific and consistent every day. (ie. Take the attendance to the front office everyday; go get the napkins from down the hall, some activity also that he might have a buddy to bring along with him too.) • Sit on an inflated seat cushion while sitting on a classroom chair or on the floor at circle time. This enables him/her to get a little movement input in an appropriate way as he/she sits rather than to get up to move a bit when not acceptable to the teacher. • Try hand "fidgets" such as a koosh ball, hand exerciser, or other non-distracting handheld item. To calm and organize the child who is "always on the go" and also gives a child who tends to "zone out" out a tool to stay alert and tuned in. • Use a weighted lap pad or weight vest to get calming sensory input, as well as a physical cue to stay put if needed during a fine motor activity. • A written (or picture) schedule of what will be done in the classroom each day is very helpful for your child to know what is coming next. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play on the playground or outside for at least 15 min • Massage feet to "reorganize," • Use theraputty/playdough • Utilize body sox • Make body sandwiches • Wheelbarrow walk • Oral work — sucking thick liquids through a straw (smoothies, etc.), crunchy, spicy and chewy snacks (to give input into jaws and teeth) prior to and/or during homework • Pushing/pulling objects at home (ie. Moving furniture), helping to carry in groceries • Jumping on cushion, slowly, with an activity to catch/toss ball or to 'give five' in different positions • Go for a bike ride. • Take out trash • Carry laundry basket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with cooking, mixing, chopping, etc. • Help set table, using two hands to carry and balance a tray • Provide crunchy and chewy foods • Have him/her sit on a cushion while eating • Give him/her choices of what he/she wants to eat FIRST, SECOND, Etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family time: clay projects, painting projects, play dough, etc. • Warm bath with bubbles and calming essential oil (does not have to be every night) • Massage during reading time or give calming input with a massager. • Soft calming music playing