### Sensory Diet Activities for Children

#### Touch/Deep Pressure

- **Swaddle**
- **Bear hugs**
- **Backscratch**
- **Massage with/without lotion**
- **Joint compressions**
- **Therapy brushing**
- **Warm bath**
- **Scrub with washcloth/scrubby**
- **Water play**
- **Wear certain fabrics**
- **Explore various textures**
- **Sit in the sunshine/shade**
- **Jump on “crash pad”**
- **Log rolling**
- **Use hand fidgets**
- **Play with stuffed toys**
- **Make mudpies**
- **Use fingerpaint or other paints**
- **Use glitter glue**

#### Others:

- **Arts & crafts**
- **Use foamy soap/shaving cream**
- **Play with whipped cream**
- **Pet a dog, cat, or other animal**
- **Mix cookie dough, cake batter**
- **Weighted blanket, vest, lap pad**
- **“Sandwich” between pillows**
- **Climb under sofa cushions**
- **Play in sandbox**
- **Use Play-doh, Gak, Floam, Sculpey, Silly Putty, clay**
- **Sensory bin with dry rice & beans or other materials**
- **Vibrating toys - pens, balls, stuffed toys**
- **Use vibrating toothbrush**
- **Vibramat/Tender Vibes mattress**

#### Movement/Proprioception

- **Rocking (in your arms, hobby horse, or rocking chair)**
- **Playing horse on your knee**
- **Crawling on hands and knees**
- **Commando crawling with full body**
- **Walk**
- **Run**
- **Jump**
- **March**
- **Dance**
- **Bunny hop**
- **Wheelbarrow walk**
- **Animal walks**
- **Jumping jacks**
- **Floor push ups**
- **Wall push ups**
- **Sit ups**
- **Use swings**
- **Playground slides**
- **Use monkey bars**
- **Climb stairs**

#### Others:

- **Climb ladders**
- **Jump on mini-trampoline**
- **Use Sit n’ Spin, Dizzy Disc Jr., or other spinning toy**
- **Hop-It balls**
- **Inflatable seat cushions**
- **Ride on a therapy ball**
- **Ride a tricycle/bicycle**
- **Ride a scooter/skateboard**
- **Amusement park rides**
- **Swimming**
- **Push a grocery cart or stroller**
- **Brain Gym and yoga exercises**
- **Roll down a hill**
- **Hokey Pokey**
- **Play catch**
- **Balloon tennis**
- **Cartwheels and somersaults**
- **Ice skating/sledding/skiing**
- **Pogo Stick/Bungee Jumper**

**Note:** Generally, rhythmic movement is calming while erratic movement is arousing. Never force movement. Look out for physiological responses such as increased distractibility, disorientation, nausea, breathing changes, unexpected tiredness, suddenly pale or flushed skin.

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More Sensory Diet Activities for Children

**Listening/Auditory**

- Listen to favorite music
- Discover calming vs. arousing music
- Bang on pots and pans
- Play musical instruments
- Listen to sounds of nature outdoors
- Singing
- Humming
- Whispering
- Blow whistles
- Therapeutic Listening programs
- Sound Eaze/School Eaze CDs
- White noise machine or CD

- Observe silence
- Identify and label sounds
- Use earplugs or sound-canceling headphones
- Explore the stereo volume control knob
- “Safe space” with quiet and low light

**Looking/Vision**

- Look at mobiles, lava lamps, bubble lamps
- Colored light bulbs
- Avoid fluorescent bulbs (visual flicker, noise, and mercury content in compact fluorescents)
- “Safe space” with minimal visuals
- Respect color preference in clothing, objects, and interior decorating
- Reconsider complicated prints and patterns on clothing, walls, and floors
- Toys in opaque containers
- Leave out 5-10 toys at a time to avoid visual overload
- Look at photos
- Look at picture books
- Look at nature - fish tanks, farm, zoo, ocean

- Watch cartoons and movies
- High-quality sunglasses outdoors
- Tinted lenses indoors if sensitive to glare
- Wide brim hat or visor outdoors
- Games and activities that develop visual skills-mazes, dot-to-dots, I Spy, drawing, flashlight tag, etc.

**Smell/Taste/Oral Comforts**

- Essential oils and scented candles
- Explore personal preference and discover invigorating (typically lemon and peppermint) vs. calming (typically vanilla, rose, and sweet orange)
- Smell flowers
- Sniff spices and herbs
- Blindfold smelling game
- Explore tastes: sweet, salty, sour, spicy, bitter
- Eat frozen/cool/warm foods
- Explore textures: crunchy, creamy, chewy, lumpy
- Chew gum/suck on lollipop
- Blow bubbles
- Suck thick liquid through straw
- Use age appropriate “chewy”

- Others:

Note: Avoid lavender and tea tree oil as studies show they may cause hormonal imbalances in young boys.

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