

Calming exercises for sensory seeking children

Sessions only need to be 5 minutes long and can be slotted into any part of the day when a child needs a sensory break. They are especially useful before lessons at the beginning of the day and can be added to alerting activities for a slightly longer session.

- Child holding your wrist and you holding theirs and let them lean back (make sure there is a soft landing in case they fall). Let them gently pull themselves up.
- Put a long rope across the floor and pretend it's a tightrope or just use a line on the floor. The child needs to make sure that each step connects heel to toe. They should walk along the line/rope and then turn and walk back, this should be done slowly.
- Carrying weighted toys or fill a 2 litre soda bottle with water and make a game that includes carrying the bottle for extended periods of time (1 minute at a time at least).
- Carrying heavy books around the classroom – good for transition between lessons.
- Child rolls a tennis ball by their fingertips from the bottom of a wall, so they have to kneel and then up till they are on tip toe, then back again. Make sure they don't cheat by cupping the ball with their hands and going too fast.
- Roll child comfortably tight in a blanket; lay them on their stomach and with moderate pressure roll a therapy ball over their back 3 times
- Tug of war but make sure child does not get over stimulated by the excitement that often happens with this game. Use a rope or large ball, these are best done kneeling.
- Have your child push a weighted box across the floor from one side of the room to the other.
- Child catches tennis or similar sized ball, or a bean bag, before you throw move the ball around and encourage them to follow it with their eyes. (also useful for social skills on good looking).
- Child stands on a wobble board or inflated cushion, stand at 12 o' clock and gentle throw a ball for them to catch (size of ball dependent on ability). Move to 3 o' clock and make them throw ball back. Repeat moving in a circle until back to the beginning.
- Make a child push on a wall as if they are trying to move it back.
- Kneeling next to each other make child try and push your hands back and then reverse, so they try and stop yours (be careful not to overstimulate the child).

Alerting Activities.

These are to stimulate a child and can be used as part of a longer sensory circuit of 15 minutes ending with some calming activities.

- Small Trampoline, child bounces, make sure they are safe by holding their arms.
- Crab walk across the floor picking up objects.
- With a partner play crab football.
- Make child jump with both feet together, first forward then back, if possible have a line or rope they have to clear.
- Superman: Child lies stomach down on the floor and then stretches legs and feet in the air, hold for as long as possible.
- Place small spot mats or similar far enough apart so the child has to stretch to reach each one, have an object at the end for them to pick up and bring back. It is important that they are not jumping to each one.
- Place several spot mats on the floor in the shape of a pyramid, bottom ones are 1 point, next level is 2 etc. Child has to throw beanbags onto the mats and cover each mat. Make sure they are not too far away and manageable for ability level.
- Crawl under a chair, table or through a play tunnel.

Therapy ball activities:-

- Child squishes a therapy ball
- Rolling on stomach on top of ball
- Bounces up and down while seated on ball.

These activities could also make up a circuit where one is done immediately after the other, for example:-

- Make child jump with both feet together, first forward then back, if possible have a line or rope they have to clear.
- Crawl under a chair, table or through a play tunnel.
- Superman: Child lies stomach down on the floor and then stretches legs and feet in the air, hold for as long as possible.
- Crab walk across the floor picking up objects.
- Finish session with a few calming activities.

These activities could also be written on cards and the child randomly picks three from the alerting pile and three from the calming pile, this keeps each session different and stops it stagnating and becoming boring.