

Heavy Work Activities

Naturally Occurring Activities Within the Home Environment (used to design a sensory diet with the family):

- Carry heavy items (baskets with cardboard blocks, groceries for Mom, etc.).
- Allow child to chew gum, eat chewy or crunchy foods, or sip water from a water bottle with a straw while doing homework.
- Push or pull boxes with toys or a few books in it (more resistance is provided if boxes are pushed/pulled across a carpeted floor).
- Fill a pillowcase with a few stuffed animals in it for weight. Child can then push or pull the pillowcase up a ramp, incline or stairs.
- Take the cushions off sofas, vacuum under them, then put them back. Can also climb on them or jump and "crash" into them.
- Pull other children around on a sheet or blanket.
- Roller skate/rollerblade uphill.
- Pull a heavy trash can.
- Perform household chores, such as:
 - Vacuum.
 - Sweep.
 - Mop.
 - Dust.
 - Carry the laundry basket.
 - Wipe off the table after dinner.
 - Carry buckets of water to clean with or to water flowers/plants/trees.
 - Clean windows or the front of appliances using a spray bottle.
 - Scrub rough surfaces with a brush.
 - Help change the sheets on the bed (then toss the linens down the stairs).
- Perform yard work, such as:
 - Mow the lawn.
 - Rake the grass/leaves.
 - Push the wheelbarrow.
 - Shovel sand into a wheelbarrow, push the wheelbarrow to a spot, dump out sand and use a rake to level it out (functional for filling in low spots in backyard).
 - Dig dirt to help plant flowers.
 - Pull a friend or heavy items in a wagon.
 - Push a friend in a wheelbarrow.
- Drink thick liquids (as in milkshake, applesauce, or slurpy) through a straw. The thickness of the straw and the thickness of the liquid can be varied to change the degree of heavy work (sucking) required.
- Carry heavy cushions.
- Have pillow fights.
- Play in sandbox with damp heavy sand.
- Have the child "help" by pushing chairs into table after a meal.
- Push a child's cart filled with cans and then put the cans away on a low shelf so that the child has to be on hands and knees (a weight bearing position) to put the cans away.
- Participate in activities such as gymnastics, horseback riding, wrestling, karate, swimming (can also have child dive after weighted sticks thrown in pool).
- Bathe the dog.
- Wash the car.
- Jump or climb in inner tubes.
- Fill up a child's suitcase with heavy items (such as books) and push/pull the suitcase across the room.

Heavy Work Activities

- When traveling, let child pull own small suitcase on wheels.
- Go "shopping" with a child's shopping cart filled with items, or have child push shopping cart when you go shopping.
- Go "camping" with a heavy blanket pulled across a few chairs. Child can help set up and take down the blanket.
- Have the child help rearrange his/her bedroom furniture.
- Have child put large toys and equipment away.
- Participate in climbing activities (such as playground equipment).
- Swing from the trapeze bar.
- Push against a wall.
- Fill up big toy trucks with heavy blocks, push with both hands to knock things down.
- Participate in sports activities involving running and jumping.
- Have the child color a "rainbow" with large paper on the floor or with sidewalk chalk outside while child is on hands and knees.
- Play "cars" under the kitchen table where the child pushes the car with one hand while creeping and weight bearing on the other hand.
- Walk up a ramp or incline.

Upon completing the heavy work jobs, it may be beneficial to complete several deep pressure activities to calm your child. Activities may include:

- Play the "sandwich game." This simply refers to compressing the child's body (the "inside" of the sandwich) in a folded mat (the "bread" of the sandwich), and applying some downward pressure to the top mat.
- Arrange a "squish" tunnel. To do this, vertically orient cushions, pillows, beanbag chairs or gym mats, and position the mats close to a wall. Have your child crawl next to the wall and while the guide applies what for his is a comfortable amount of over-pressure via the cushion. Repeat three to five times.
- Play the "Steamroller Game." This refers to rolling an exercise ball, with some downward pressure, over the child's body. Maintain firm, steady pressure to your child's tolerance, and move the ball in slow, controlled movements.

With passive deep pressure activities, the child can choose to lie either face up or face down (or both in the same body break). When performing all active and passive deep pressure activities, it is important to monitor your child's response, continually seeking feedback by asking the student questions about the activity process: ("Should I squeeze harder," "Is this enough," etc.).

- You child can also provide this pressure himself, by any of the following techniques. Please note he may require some coaching in these techniques, and possibly some subtle cueing during initial stages of use:
 - Press hands flat on stomach and apply firm, steady pressure
 - Place palms together in front of chest and press palms firmly together
 - Place both hands on top of their head and press down
 - Self-hug around the shoulders.
 - Lean forward so body leans against the legs and then hug the legs
 - Stand at a desk with hands flat on the table, lean weight downwards through arms

Heavy Work Activities

- From a seated position, with the elbow supported on the desk, press the forehead into the palm of the hand.

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