



Sensory and movement games for kids to help pass the time (and keep your sanity!)

We all need to move or get some type of sensory input and movement to keep our brains alert and our bodies calm. Here are some ideas of things you can do indoors that don't require any special equipment or a lot of time! If you can make these part of regular routines it works even better.

Important tip: deep pressure/heavy work tends to be more calming while fast movement and vestibular input (including visual input from TV, I-pad, video games...) will tend to be more alerting.

Top 10 sensory-motor activities:

- 1) Playing in a large box full of blankets, packing material, pillows, small balls... is a fun deep pressure activity. Shake or spin the box and pretend they are in a washing machine getting washed.
- 2) At bed time you can play a game of piling lots of blankets and pillows on top of your kids (faces exposed of course). It is also fun to have them be in charge of piling on the blankets and pillows- this is "heavy work" and helps calm down busy bodies.

- 3) Pushing or carrying heavy things is great for deep pressure input (carry things like heavy balls, a sack of groceries, big toys, pillows or stuffed animals...) Try to add weight to things your child already likes to push, pull or carry. They can also help move furniture, boxes of food/drinks or a laundry basket full of cloths (can lift or push- both are great) Helping with chores is a win-win!!
- 4) Hand and foot wrestling (push hands against hands or feet against feet and see who is the strongest)

Deep pressure through the hands can be powerful sensory input and it also helps develop better hand strength.

- 5) Give your child old shampoo, dish soap, or ketchup containers (well rinsed of course) to squeeze water out of in the bath tub or sink; squeezing out glue or paints from bottles during art activities also works well.
- 6) Have your child use a spray bottle to water plants or let them spray colored water in the bathtub to make a water color design. (can put paper in the tub if you want to keep it)
- 7) Play dough, cookie or bread dough, gel balls, soft foam (like Nerf) balls, floam or silly putty are all great things to squeeze.
- 8) Stimulation through the mouth is a very powerful way to get into the sensory system. Give your child things to eat that are cold, crunchy, chewy, sour, and spicy. Or have them suck thick liquids through a straw (shakes, smoothie, yogurt, apple sauce...)

- 9) Have your child play with things that vibrate. (try a bumble ball, vibrating wiggle pen, hand held fans, vibrating pillows...)
- 10) Taking a bath provides deep pressure. To add even more deep pressure, give your child a bath or hand towel to play with in the tub. It is very heavy and provides even more deep pressure.

Another thing to try in the tub is ~1/4 – 1/2 cup Epsom salts. Some children with sensory integration problems need the extra Magnesium that the salts provide and this can be very calming!

Top 10 gross motor games:

- 1) Dance- put on your favorite music and have a dance party
- 2) Yoga- make up your own moves (like mermaid pose or spider man pose.... The possibilities are endless)
- 3) Wheel barrel walk around the house (hold at hips it is easier) You can also do wall push ups- have your child stand with their hands on the wall and arms straight- bend and straighten arms like a push up.
- 4) Sit and spins are great if you have one otherwise you can do spinning in an office chair.

5) Sit and bounce on a ball, lap, rocking horse...

6) Mini trampolines or big trampolines are awesome but you can also jump on the bed (or put the mattress on the floor) Play on a blow up mattress is fun too. (Desperate times call for desperate measures!)

7) Rock or spin in a laundry basket (good for babies and toddlers)

8) Rock in a rocking chair

9) Play hide and seek (sort of a movement game)

10) Swing in a blanket (good for babies and smaller kids) need 2 people to hold the ends of the blanket.

Obviously if you can go outside and move that is ideal- slide, swing, climb!!

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