

HOME SENSORY STRATEGIES

Bridgeport Board of Education

Occupational Therapy Department

Apply the concept of “Deposits and Withdrawals” for your child: WITHDRAWALS are sensory demands such as attending to a tabletop task, going to a birthday party, going to any loud, busy place, sitting at a restaurant. For your child to make a **WITHDRAWAL**, he/she needs to have to make a **DEPOSIT** first. **DEPOSITS** include activities such as bringing him/her to the park for 30 minutes or giving him/her 15-20 minutes of activity from the list below before you make a WITHDRAWAL.

Below is a list of sensory ideas based on what you are observing with your child at home. Find the area that most describes your child and start using 1 to 2 strategies. Look to see what works and what didn't.

Behavior Observed: Actively Seeks Out Movement/Difficulty Participating in Non-Preferred Activities

1. ____ Wall push-ups: while standing, have your child push on the wall for 5-10 repetitions (may be done prior to table top activities) (Williams & Shellenberger, 2001).
 2. ____ Push a weighted grocery cart or wagon (Williams & Shellenberger, 2001).
 3. ____ Table push-ups: While standing, have your child place hands on the table and push off to lift feet off the floor for 10-15 repetitions (Williams & Shellenberger, 2001).
 4. ____ Wash the table or counters at home
 5. ____ Move furniture in the house.
 6. ____ Help with clean up by putting away toys at the end of the day
 7. ____ Isometric exercise: In a seated position, have your child place hands together in prayer position for 2-3 seconds with the adult repeating “push” and “relax.” Repeat 3-5 times.
 8. ____ Place 5% of your child’s body weight into a backpack using water bottles, soft weights, or books. Have your child wear backpack during tabletop activities or during transitions (please consult occupational therapist to help determine correct weight).
 9. ____ Weighted stuffed animals or pillows: Rip out a part of the seam and place a Ziploc back of rice, beans, or other heavy non-toxic material (Williams & Shellenberger, 2001).
 10. ____ Use fidgets to help with self-regulation: beanie babies, bendable drinking straws, pieces of soft fabric, etc. (Williams & Shellenberger, 2001).
1. ____ Offer “brain food” to help calm and regulate: string cheese, bagels, dried fruit, gum, fruit roll-ups, raisins, Starburst, Gummy Bears (Williams & Shellenberger, 2001).
 2. ____ To improve regulation: chew on a straw with flexible neck
 3. ____ To Improve regulation: Suck or sip on a water bottle

4. ____ Allow your child to listen to white noise (ocean waves, rain, waterfall) or music previously identified by a parent as calming. Music or white noise may be played on a portable audio player with headphones (Williams & Shellenberger, 2001).
5. ____ Provide a contrasting background to help increase visual attention e.g., red dish on a white placemat, white paper on a blue table.

Behavior Observed: Very Tired/ Sluggish

1. ____ Jump up like a frog or grasshopper and repeat 5-10 times.
2. ____ Sitting and bouncing on a therapy ball while reciting the alphabet or identifying numbers or shapes (Williams & Shellenberger, 2001).
3. ____ Jump on a trampoline while popping bubbles or throwing bean bags into a target.
4. ____ Wheelbarrow walking through the house.
5. ____ Place your child face down on the therapy ball and rocking forward and back with hands touching the floor each time and repeat 5-10 times.
6. ____ Place your child face down on the therapy ball and rock them forward towards the floor. Have them complete a puzzle bearing weight on one arm for support while the other puts puzzle pieces in place.
7. ____ Have your child lie over therapy ball and plop over into pillows (“crash and dump”) (Williams & Shellenberger, 2001). Repeat 5-7 times.
8. ____ Have your child play with Silly Putty or other oil-based clays that do not dry out and create shapes, letters, or numbers (Williams & Shellenberger, 2001).
9. ____ Have your child play with “feely buckets”: fill a bucket or dishpan with uncooked beans, rice, or sand and hide objects such as plastic numbers or letters for her/him to find (Williams & Shellenberger, 2001).
10. ____ Offer “brain food” to help increase alertness and organization: pretzels, popcorn, apples, chips, rice cakes, cheerios (may string into a necklace) (Williams & Shellenberger, 2001).

Behavior Observed: Emotional Outbursts/Difficulty with Transitions

1. ____ Use pictures of common objects, people, or places to communicate your child’s schedule. May use iPhone, iPad, or Board Maker pictures.
2. ____ Provide verbal and visual prompts of expected transitions
3. ____ Reduce clutter in your child’s play space: introduce one to two items at a time during tabletop activities.
4. ____ Have your child wear noise reduction earphones or a hat over their ears. This can be done during loud activities such as music or in busy environments such as a birthday party.
5. ____ Allow your child to listen to white noise (ocean waves, rain, waterfall) or music previously identified as calming. Music or white noise may be played on a portable audio player with headphones (Williams & Shellenberger, 2001).

6. ____ Provide deep pressure such as hugs, shoulder and arm squeezes
7. ____ Allow the child to hold a transition item of their choice
8. ____ Use a visual timer to help structure transitions between activities in home and the community
9. ____ Create a quiet corner in the house with bean bag chairs, pillows, books, headphones to use when your child is disregulated or overstimulated.

Behavior Observed: Difficulty with Personal Boundaries/Bumping into Furniture and Other Children

1. ____ Sit with your child or create a space for your child to sit in during group activities on the floor such as birthday parties
2. ____ Place your child at the beginning or the end of the lines or groups when in the community to limit the amount of people around him or her.
3. ____ Deep Pressure activities: hugs, arm squeezes, wheelbarrow walking
4. ____ Allow the student to hold a fidget item ‘
5. ____ Practice deep breathing prior to group activities

If you have questions, please contact the Occupational Therapy Department at Skane School

(203) 275-1451.