

Sensory activities fall into different categories. Perhaps the most useful one for self-regulation is Proprioceptive Input. That's a fancy word for "heavy work" that engages your joints. These activities make you feel grounded and can be calming for a high-running child or invigorating for a low-running kid.

This batch of activities create Proprioceptive Input:

- Bear walk
- Crab walk
- Pillow fight
- Wrestling
- Spinning
- Tug-of-war
- Hopscotch
- Tickle fight
- Drumming
- Donkey kicks
- Play leap frog
- Beanbag catch
- Run in circles
- Repot the plants
- Make play dough
- Hang upside down
- Play with face paints
- Go on a texture walk
- Wheelbarrow walking or races
- Drag them on a sheet or blanket
- Tummy time push ups (for babies)
- Have a texture scavenger hunt at home
- Mix cookie dough or cake batter with hands
- Swing your child around from their arms or legs
- Make a kid burrito by rolling her tightly in a blanket
- Put shaving cream on a placemat to squish around
- Pour salt on a cookie sheet and paint with your fingers.
- Make a touch book of different textures from your home
- Toddlers can push their own strollers, the laundry or grocery cart
- Hammer ice cubes in a plastic bag (then use them for lemonade!)
- Put single items in paper bags and let kids try to guess what they are
- Sweeping
- Swiffering
- Dustbusting
- Wiping the counters
- Stuffed animal catch
- Taking out the trash
- Water balloon catch
- Hanging from a chin-up bar
- Bouncing on hopping ball
- Banging on pots and pans
- Have a parade and march
- Unloading the washing machine and the dryer



- Jump (on a mini-trampoline, from a chair to a sofa, on the bed, etc.)
- Push-o-war (put palms against each other and push as hard as you can)
- Make your own sandbox with a bowl full of dry beans or styrofoam peanuts
- Have your toddler or child carry a backpack full of their own toys and books
- Roll out the cookie dough by rolling a big ball firmly over the back and limbs
- Swinging: Try different types of swinging to see how it feels (tire, rope, belly, etc)
- Make a kid sandwich by pressing down on him between two pillows or couch cushions
- Spread beans out in a baking tray or pan and make a construction site for trucks. Bury small toys in rice and have them do an archeological dig



- ABC Pushups (Push-up plank position, touch chest with hand and say a letter of the alphabet, all the way up to the letter Z. Each letter said, the student changes the hand that touches the chest)
- Rock in a rocking chair (Tactile Input: Many kids are overly sensitive to tactile input. Tags, pant buttons, getting wet, or even the feeling of foods in the mouth can drive some kids batty. Doing these activities can help children get used to tactile stimulation gradually and can be fun for all kids.)
- Animal footsteps (Child lays down and chooses an animal and using your fingers or hands try to make it feel like that animal walking over back and limbs.) Vestibular Input (swinging and spinning) is intense and long-lasting sensory input. It should be provided in doses and parents should watch and be sensitive to how their children react and help them learn to manage this type of input to keep them even.

A B C D e f G

Breathing is especially important for kids with low muscle tone, but we can all use to exercise our lungs and benefit from the therapeutic effects of breathing deeply.

- Have a cottonball race
- Make bubble mountains in a bowl with a straw and soapy water
- Blow gently on each other's faces (see who can blow the longest)
- Play soccer by blowing a cottonball across the table scoring if you can blow it off the other person's end



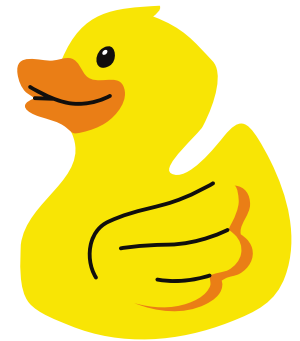
Some kids need extra oral-motor activities, but they tend to be calming for everyone.

- Sip seltzer
- Crunch ice
- Lick lemons
- Use chewelry
- Use crazy straws
- Use a vibrating toothbrush
- Make smoothies and suck through a straw
- Practice chewing gum and blowing bubbles



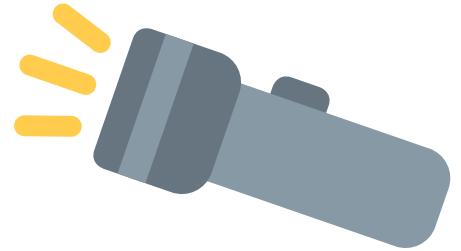
In the bath: Some sensory defensive kids hate getting wet, but these activities make bathing more fun for all kids:

- Play with shaving cream
- Soap crayons or bath paints
- Add food coloring to the water
- Ladles, cups, strainers, squirters, funnels
- Rub with different textures while in the bath - a smooth or nubby washcloth, a loofah, a nail brush.



Visual, Olfactory (Smell), and Auditory Stimulating Activities:

- Wear sunglasses
- Shadow puppets
- Build a fort or tent
- Play by candlelight
- Do mazes or dot to dots
- Play catch with a balloon
- Trace your body or hands
- Turn off the lights and play flashlight tag
- Hide under a blanket and read by flashlight
- Sit quietly and listen to nature. (You can also use nature sounds recordings)
- Play a listening game. Sit very quietly and try to guess the sounds you hear.
- Let them play with the stereo dial to experiment with loud and soft sounds.



Smells: Explore how your child reacts to different smells. If you find some are soothing or alerting, get lotions, soaps, or candles to help regulate mood.

- Pet the cat
- Put on lotion
- Make extreme faces
- Eat sensory savvy snacks
- Give each other massages
- Butterfly kisses (eyelash kisses)
- Tickle Fingers (trace fingers lightly over the skin)
- Practice blowing out birthday candles on playdough cakes
- Try giving a child a strong flavored candy or gum before trying a new food at dinner.
- Put dollops of different colored paints in a baggie and squish around to mix the paints.
- Using a blindfold have them guess different smells. (peanut butter, maple syrup, apples, etc)
- Create a sensory savvy spot (beanbag chair or pile of pillows with soft lighting, soothing items such as books and stuffed animals, music with headphones and a snack)

