

Calming Deep Pressure and Heavy Work Activities

Touch - Touch is a major source of information to the brain about our environment. It is a feedback system for our body about our movement and position in space. Thus, contributes to our surroundings. Use firm pressure when touching the child, never light touch. A big bear hug is often calming.



Proprioception – this system informs the brain of the body's position in space. It provides us with information on how far to reach, how much pressure to use, where our body is in space, and what our body scheme is. Proprioceptive stimulus involves movement, compression, or stretching at a joint. More developed proprioceptive awareness may help a child remain calm, do large and small motor tasks, focus, increase eye contact, organise movements, and become more sociable.

Activity Ideas:

- **Roll up tightly** in different types of material (stretchy, thick, silky, velvety) making sure head stays free.
- Firm towelling/rub down after bath, then wrap child tightly in towel
- **Theraput/** blue-tac activities: pinching, squeezing, kneading, twisting.
- Rough and tumble play
- **Body Squeeze** - Sit on the floor behind the child, straddling him/her with your legs. Put your arms around child's knees, draw them towards his/her chest and squeeze hard. Hold tight. If tolerated can add gentle rocking forwards and backwards.
- **Sandwich games** (child is place between beanbags, sofa cushions, mattresses and pressure is applied to top layer) keeping clear of their head
- Slowly roll a large ball or bolster over the child applying pressure
- Very **firm massage** on both sides of arms and legs as well as back (but NOT on the tummy)
- Massage cheeks and jaw, using firm circular movements, moving downwards towards lips.
- Wear a **heavy backpack** (no more than 10% of child's body weight) for short periods of time.
- **Trampolining** – Jump 3x then 'crash', jump 3x then 'crash' (do 10x)
- **Play wrestling:** pushing game where two people lock hands facing each other and try to see who can push and make the other person step back first. Use other body parts also, but be sure to have rules (no hitting, no biting, no scratching, one person says stop then both stop).
- **Pulling, pushing and lifting**, e.g. opening moderately heavy doors, pull a toys in a wagon or tied up in a sheet
- **Help** with household chores, e.g. carry the shopping, vacuum clean, wipe table, mop the floor.
- **Digging** in sand, gravel or soil.
- **Stamping** feet, when walking along, try foot stamping on different surfaces, i.e. gravel, tarmac etc.
- **Tug of war** - pulling bed sheet, tie to a fixed object or between two people
- **Wheelbarrow walking** – walking on hands whilst someone holds your legs (you may need to start by holding them at the pelvis and having their legs around your body for extra support)
- **Pillow fights**- hit on body, arms and legs; not head
- **Climbing** – ladders, ramps, trees, monkey bars etc