



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ADVICE

Ideas for Calming Sensory Input

- Deep pressure (placing / squeezing hands on shoulders; rolling a tennis ball on the back or down the arms)
- Hand / foot massage
- Slow rocking or swaying
- Sit on or under a bean bag / large pillows; wrap in a duvet (supervise at all times)
- Guide the child in active and passive stretches
- Provide a quiet space or reduce noise & light levels; create a den or safe space
- Provide fidget toys or something to squeeze

Ideas for Sensory Seeking

Visual:

- Provide spinning items, flashing toys, torches & mirrors etc
- Try Apps such as 'Sensory Electra' and 'Sensory Magma' for visually stimulating screen play

Auditory:

- Provide opportunity to listen to preferred music / theme tunes / household sounds (provide on a device with headphones if they prefer a louder volume that is too much for other members of the household)



- Be mindful that humming, repeating phrases, and vocalising (including shouting & crying) can be a child seeking sound and therefore creating it themselves, but that it can also be an attempt to control auditory input and block out environmental noise around them that may be too much to process or too loud

Oral:

- Use an appropriate oral chew (if available)
- Try crunchy / chewy snacks to provide similar sensory input e.g. carrot sticks, strawberry laces, breadsticks, different cereals

Movement:

- Press-ups, wall push-ups, chair push-ups
- Bounce on a gym ball or wobble on a pile of cushions / pillows
- Follow online exercise programmes e.g. The Body Coach or use a Wii Fit
<https://www.youtube.com/user/thebodycoach1/search?query=kids>
- Carry out movements and stretches in front of a mirror, for added visual input and improved body awareness in addition to the movement itself
- Use cans of food or toys as weights
- Set up an indoor obstacle course
- Help with cleaning: sweeping, mopping and wiping surfaces are all great forms of proprioceptive input

Tactile Seeking (Touch):

- Playdoh, Arts & Crafts (painting, finger knitting, scrapbooking, tearing paper, making salt dough etc)



- Tactile Adventure Bins (hide toys or jigsaw pieces in porridge, sand, lentils, rice, popcorn etc to retrieve)
- Treasure Hunts (hide small objects in playdoh or adventure bin to find with fingers)
- Shaving Foam & Bubbles (draw in them, blow them)
- Kitchen Activities (mixing, measuring, tasting, smelling, washing up)
- Extra baths / showers (bubbles, soap, sponges, flannels and brushes)

Ideas for Anxiety Reduction

- Structure the day and make a visual guide / daily timetable / checklist
- Mindfulness colouring patterns; arts & crafts
- Plant bulbs / seeds in empty pots or in the garden
- Read daily or listen to audiobooks
- Carry out yoga / stretches / deep breathing exercises
- Write a daily journal; draw a daily picture; keep a video diary
- Keep in touch with friends and family via Skype & FaceTime; send letters, pictures or postcards to friends and family



- Minimise screen time

Support with Handwashing

- Explain the process & do one step at a time
- Use visual support (if required) to support understanding
- Trial different soaps (bar, liquid, foam); determine preference for warm or cold water