



Sensory Diets

What is a Sensory Diet?

A Sensory Diet, surprisingly, has nothing to do with food! A sensory diet is uniquely tailored to your child's needs and provides a plan for sensory activities throughout the day to ensure your child is getting the input they need to function their best!

How do I know what input my child needs?

Your child's sensory diet may include a variety of activities that help them stay alert, calm, or organized. For example, proprioceptive input is calming to our body's sensory and nervous system. If your child has high arousal levels, they may need more proprioceptive activities. On the other hand, vestibular input has the opposite response. Vestibular input alerts the sensory and nervous system and is beneficial for children with low arousal levels.

Do not worry, your occupational therapist will help you select what activities are appropriate for your child's unique sensory needs!

We have included a list of activities that may be included in your child's sensory diet below.

Proprioceptive Activities

- Playing in a ball pit
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Crawling
- Dancing
- Animal walks- pretending to walk like a specific animal (i.e., bear, crab, snake, kangaroo, etc.)
- Wheelbarrow walks
- Push-ups
- Tug-of-war
- Pushing or carrying weighted objects (i.e., backpack, shopping chart, vacuum, groceries, etc.)
- Marching
- Climbing
- Anything that applies deep pressure to the body such as a weighted blanket, weighted vest, rolling up like a burrito in a blanket, tight hugs, etc.
- Gardening
- Playing catch with a large or heavy ball
- Washing a car
- Wiping a chalkboard



- “Crash pad”- a safe location where the child can jump and crash into (i.e., mattress, beanbag chair, foam pit)

Vestibular Activities

- Swinging
- Jump rope
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Log rolling
- Slide and climb on playground equipment
- Rocking chair
- Rolling around on different surfaces
- Remaining stationary on moving equipment (i.e., elevator, car, wagon ride)
- Stretching body
- Scooter board activities

Oral Motor Activities

- Blowing bubbles
- Vibrating toothbrushes
- Foods with different textures and flavors (i.e., crunchy, spicy, sour, sticky, soft)
- Chewing gum
- Blow toys (i.e., whistles, kazoos)
- Resistive sucking- the type of bottle or straw used provides different levels of sensory input
- Deep breathing exercises
- Chewy Lego necklace

Tactile Activities

- Slime or putty activities
- Find hidden shapes and objects in a container/bin of dry beans or rice
- Sandbox play
- Finger painting in shaving cream
- Foam soap during bath time
- Vibration
- Coloring and cutting on different textured paper
- Popping bubbles

Auditory Activities

- Wear noise-cancelling headphones
- Listen to classical music
- Ask your therapist about “Therapeutic Listening”
- Metronome activities



Visual Activities

- Wearing sunglasses/hat
- Eye Spy games
- Using sand timers/hourglass

If you have any questions or concerns regarding a Sensory Diet, talk to your occupational therapist at your next visit!