

Stay at Home Sensory Activities for Kids

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Sensory Glossary

Vestibular: This system coordinates movements of the eyes, head, and body to help with balance and navigating our environment without falling or bumping into things. This system helps children attend to task, have adequate gross motor coordination, eye motor control, balance, bilateral coordination, and move throughout their environment with confidence.

Proprioceptive: This system allows the brain to know where our body is in space and how our body is moving. This system helps children regulate their emotions, behavioral responses, as well as their gross motor coordination and fine motor coordination.

Heavy Work: Activities that consist of added resistance to the body that promote a grounding and centering sensation in our bodies. These activities engage our proprioceptive system for increased body awareness, attention to task, and appropriate arousal level.

Visual Motor Integration: The ability of our eyes to work together as a team to perceive the world accurately. This skill helps children to read, write, draw, play sports, and engage in fine motor and gross motor activities.

Spatial Awareness: Is the ability to understand where one's body is in space and their relation to objects or others around them. This skill helps children to write with appropriate space between their letters and words, keep an appropriate amount of space between themselves and their peers, engaging in gross motor activities, and getting themselves dressed.

Bilateral Coordination: The ability to coordinate both sides of the body in a coordinated manner. This skill helps children turn their paper as they cut, complete jumping jacks, string blocks, fasten/unfasten buttons, zippers, and tie their shoes.

Motor Planning: This skill is responsible for organizing and sequencing out a new or unfamiliar gross motor movement. This skill helps children navigate playground equipment, coordinate same-side or opposite sides of their body, ride a bike, swim, skip, or hop.

Gross Motor Activities

Animal Walks

Animal walks are a great sensory activity that can easily be done throughout your child's day! Animal walks consist of heavy work components- which are great for achieving an appropriate arousal and improve our muscle strength! They also help with improved body awareness, hand strength, gross motor and fine motor skills, as well as following directions!

- **Bear Walks:** Place both right and left arm onto the floor and keep the weight of your body onto your feet. Move your right hand and right foot at the same time and then your left hand and left foot at the same time.
- **Crab Walks:** Start in a seated position with legs bent and hands placed behind you. Use your legs to push your body up off the floor. Now you are ready to walk forward, backward or sideways!
- **Snake Walks:** Lay flat on the floor with your elbows bent in front of you and legs straight. Use your arms to slither across the floor, keeping your stomach and legs flat onto the floor.
- **Frog Jumps:** Sit in a squatting position with your arms in between your legs. Use your arms and legs to help spring your body forward.
- **Wheel-Barrow Walks:** Start by getting onto hands and knees with your elbows straight. Your partner will hold you by your ankles and lift you up off the floor while you walk forward on your hands. Too hard? Your partner can also hold you at your thighs or hips.



Bear Walk



Crab Walk



Snake Walk



Frog Jump



Wheel-Barrow Walk

Pillow Bridge

This activity is great for working on balance, core strength, coordination, and pace.

- Place pillows onto the floor in a straight line and walk across trying to keep your balance. You can also jump from pillow to pillow, jump over a pillow, or do an animal walk going across the bridge. Get creative by arranging the pillows in different shapes and increasing the space between the pillows for an extra challenge!

Crash Mat

This activity is a great way to engage your child in some heavy work to achieve that just right arousal level while also working in upper body and core strength!

- Gather couch cushions, pillows, and blankets and arrange into a large pile onto the floor. Take a step back to jump and crash onto the crash mat! This activity is great for receiving proprioceptive input along with heavy work as the child works his or her way out of the pillows.
- Line up your pillow bridge to lead to your crash mat. Walk across your bridge keeping your balance. Once you reach to the end of the pillow, crash onto the crash mat!
- Leave a puzzle piece onto the crash mat for your child to retrieve. Once received, have them walk back across the bridge with the item. Have the child continue until all of the puzzle pieces have been collected and placed into the puzzle board.
- Hide puzzle pieces or other small fine motor items under the crash mat for your child to find. This is a great way for a child to receive deep pressure from the pillows and blankets while also engaging in heavy work for a calming effect as well as strengthening their muscles.

Pillow Mountain

This activity is a great way to engage your child in some heavy work to achieve that just right arousal level while also working in upper body and core strength!

- Take a couch cushion off of the couch and angle it onto the edge of the couch. Place another couch cushion in front of it to help keep it in place and adding more cushioning for your child. Have your child climb up the pillow mountain and slide back down.



Pillow Bridge



Crash Mat



Pillow Mountain

Push/Pull

Does your child seem a little out of sorts and seem unorganized, loss of attention, and having melt downs? Have them push or pull a laundry basket around the floor! This helps regulate your child's emotions, attention, body awareness, and muscle strength!

- Fill a laundry basket with heavy items, such as jugs of water, water bottles, medicine balls, large text books. Have your child push the laundry basket across the floor in order to retrieve puzzle pieces, stuffed animals, block etc.
- This activity can easily be changed up to a pulling activity. Attach a rope or animal leash to the laundry basket and instruct your child to pull using hand over hand.
- Place puzzle pieces into socks and spread them out onto the floor. Select a specific puzzle piece your child needs to find and have your child complete animal walk to each of the socks in order to find the correct match. Once they find the correct match, have them complete an animal walk back to the puzzle board and continue until all puzzles are found. This is a great heavy work activity while also improving on memory skills.



Visual Motor Activities

Visual motor activities are awesome ways to improve a child's eye hand coordination, gross motor and fine skills for overall success in the academic environment as well as during recreational activities.

Toss a Sock

This is a great activity to work on bilateral coordination, visual skills, while incorporating upper body strength.

- Gather a few pairs of matched socks and separate them out so there is one of each sock. Spread out the socks on opposite sides of the floor and have your child complete an animal walk to each sock in order to make the correct match.
- Once they have made a match, teach them to fold the socks into a ball, and toss it into a laundry basket.



Sock Matching



Sock Ball

Masking Tape

- Create a tic-tac-toe board onto the floor. Help your child make either “x” or “o” out of the tape to be used as their game pieces.
- Line up a few strips of tape with enough space in between for your child to jump. Be creative with the various jumping patterns they can complete, such as jumping over the lines with feet together, jumping over lines on one foot, or jumping sideways.
- Create a hop scotch board.
- Create mazes onto the floor and have your child run their car toys, trains, or action figures through the maze.



Tic-Tac-Toe



Lateral Jump



Forward Jump



Hop Scotch

Balance

- Place a plush stuffed animal on the top of your foot. Balancing on one foot, raise your foot up and over to place into a basket. Repeat on the opposite side.
- Using a kitchen spoon, have your child place a small item onto the spoon. Have your child walk toward a basket encouraging them to not drop the item until they reach the basket. This is a great activity to work on hand control, impulse control, balance, pace, and timing.
- Stand on top of a pillow while having a catch. To make it more challenging, try to balance on one foot.



Foot Balance



Spoon Balance



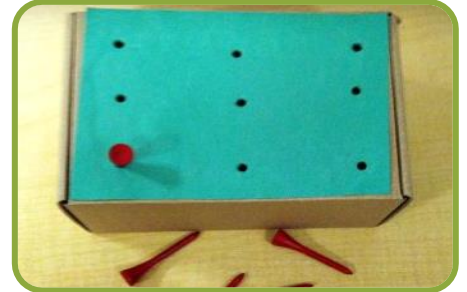
Pillow Balance

Fine Motor Activities

DIY Pegboard

This activity addresses grasp patterns, fine motor control, and visual perception skills.

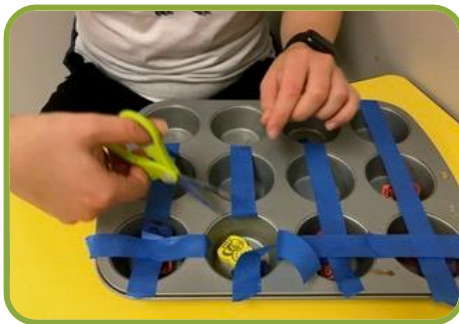
- Punch holes in the top of a cardboard box and use golf tees for the pegs.
- Have your child work on placing golf tees into each hole. You can have your child place marbles on top of each golf tee to further refine their fine motor skills.



Cutting Activity

This activity is great for strengthening fine motor skills and bilateral coordination needed to cut with scissors!

- Gather a muffin tin, painter's tape, and small action figures or other small items. Place the small items into each section of the muffin tin. Then tape across each section going vertically and horizontally. Instruct your child to make snips into the tape to free the object!
- Gather small figurines and strips of construction paper. Wrap the construction paper around each figurine and instruct your child to make snips into the paper to free their figurine from the construction paper!



Lid Matching

This activity addressed bilateral coordination, fine motor strengthening, grasping skills, and problem solving.

- Find various containers within your home and remove the lids from each jar.
- Encourage your child to problem solve which lid goes to what jar.



Clothespin Activities

There are tons of activities you can do with clothespins to increase fine motor coordination and fine motor strength.

- Gather colored clothespins and a paper plate. Draw four different colored circles on the outside of the paper plate and encourage your child to clip the correct colored clothespin to the correct circle. This activity is great for improving their bilateral coordination skills necessary for cutting and fastening/unfastening buttons or zippers.
- Gather clothespins and various open plastic containers. Write a number on the outside of the container and encourage your child to clip that amount of clothespins onto the rim of the container. This activity addresses fine motor strength, fine motor coordination, as well as problem solving and counting.
- Gather pom-poms or cotton balls, paint, and a clothespin. Have your child pick up one pom-pom using their clothespin and dipping it into their paint. When they want a new color, encourage them to pick up a new pom-pom using their clothespin and then dipping it into their new color. Each time they get a new pom-pom, they are working on their fine motor strength as well a fine motor coordination.



Puffy Paint

Making puffy paint is a great tactile sensory experience while also working on following directions and fine motor strengthening!

- Gather a can of shaving cream, liquid glue, and food coloring (If you do not have food dye, you can squirt paint into the mixture).
- Mix 3+ cups of shaving cream with 1 cup of glue and food coloring. Mix all together and divide into plastic sandwich bags. Cut a small hole into one of the corners of the plastic bag. Have your child squeeze out the puffy paint onto their painting page making puffy lines, designs, or dots!



Resources

<https://www.theottoolbox.com/>

<https://asensorylife.com/index.html>

<https://therapyfunzone.net/blog/about/links/ot-blogs/>

<http://www.theottoolbox.com/>

<http://www.ottoolkit.com/blog/>

<https://www.yourtherapysource.com/blog1/>

<https://www.growinghandsonkids.com/activities-fine-motor-skills-development>

<http://printpath.org/>

<https://theanonymousot.com/>

<http://ezebreezy.com/3-ingredient-diy-puffy-paint-for-kids/>



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www.weismanchildrens.com