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### **Activities for Proprioceptive/Deep Pressure Stimulation**

Proprioception is the sensory information from the joints and muscles that provides awareness of joint position in space. Children who have deficits in processing information from joints and muscles may have difficulty knowing where their body is in space, grading their motions, or planning their body movements. They may also appear clumsy and uncoordinated. Some children seek out excessive amounts of proprioceptive information because it is calming or improves the sense of where their body is (body awareness). In an effort to receive such sensory stimulation these children may seem disruptive or unsafe. Proprioceptive input can be safely achieved through resistive activities that provide “heavy work”, weight bearing, and oral motor activities. Firm pressure to the skin can also enhance body awareness. The following is a list of activities that incorporate proprioceptive and deep pressure input in a fun or functional manner.

- Enjoy “rough housing”- be sure to be aware of and quickly respond to the child’s response to stop so it remains an enjoyable experience. The game can be structured to include the word “start” and “stop” so each participant can control the amount of input occurring.
- Make “hot dogs” – Roll child tightly in a blanket/towel with slow, firm, steady pressure. Slowly rub “ketchup”, “mustard”, “relish”, “onions”, etc., up and down the child’s length.
- Play “Steam Roller” – Have child lie on the floor and roll a large ball, rolling pin, or hands over the length of the child’s body with consistent heavy pressure.
- Make cushion “sandwiches” – Have child lie between two or more cushions and apply pressure to the top.
- Play “melt the ice” – Hug knees as hard as you can. Hold this position except for the body parts named one at a time that can slowly relax like “melting ice”
- Have a “Turtle Race” – place a large bean bag/jacket/throw rug on a child’s back for the shell and have the child crawl while trying not to lose the shell. Increase difficulty by incorporating an obstacle course.
- Play tug-o-war – Use a large diameter rope or long towel rolled along its length to provide a good gripping surface. Let the child do most of the pulling.
- Propel self with arms or legs on a scooter, carpet squares on a tile floor, or plastic sheeting on a carpeted floor. Enhance activity by having a race or playing tug of war as above.
- Apply a padded/rubberized grip to pencils or try Pilot’s Dr. Grip pens and pencils or other writing instruments with a wider barrel or padding.
- Wear a back pack or fanny pack filled with weighted objects.
- Sit with a weight applied to the lap – books, large beanbags, heavy stuffed animal.
- Apply gentle pressure to the top of the child’s head or shoulders when giving praise.

- Provide firm deep pressure as you massage lotion into extremities.
- Sit in bean bag chair
- Lie under layers of blankets or in sleeping bag.
- Lie on stomach propped on elbows while reading, playing game, watching TV.
- Alternate work position –stand, kneel, sit on leg.
- Weigh down school supplies – add weight to crayon boxes, pencils, books with washers, plaster of paris, or other materials that can be molded and then hardened.
- Chew stiff materials like gum, taffy, caramel, beef jerky, dried fruit, theratubing, and safe plastics.
- Drink thick milk shakes or fruit mixes through a straw.
- Create an obstacle course. Label the body actions a child is performing (e.g. “Now he’s going *over* the bridge, now he’s *under* the pillows.”)
- Crab soccer – Play soccer while in the crab walking position.
- Jumping activities – on a trampoline, mattress, or inflated inner tube – use a jump rope or play hop scotch.
- Bounce while seated on a large beach ball or hippity hop.
- Swing from monkey bars, tree branches, rope swings.
- Climb on outdoor equipment.
- Push, pull, or carry heavy objects - wagons, wheelbarrow, boxes, vacuum, stack of books, tray of milk cartons for snack time.
- Bounce a basketball off wall repetitively.
- Imitate animal walks – crab, bear, seal, bunny hops, frog leaps, donkey kicks.
- Bear weight on hands – wheelbarrow walking, push-ups from floor/wall/chair, position self in quadruped and rock, hold upper body while lower body is supported by large ball, chair, or cushion.
- Play catch with a large heavy ball – medicine ball, basketball, or a Gertie ball filled with dry material.
- Play target games with differently weighted balls/items.
- Participate in football, swimming, karate, and gymnastics.
- Work with resistive material – modeling clay, silly putty, bread/pizza dough, homemade “squish ball”.
- Drop a heavy ball or object back and forth between hands.
- Practice various pouring activities – use different size containers, material types, material weights, material amounts. Strive for accuracy in force of movement.

- Provide vibration with a “Wiggle Pen” or small hand held massager.
- Use a raised line or thicker paper when writing to provide support and feedback. Gluing writing paper to construction paper or placing fine grade sand paper under paper works well to provide additional feedback. Shapes to color can be outlined with colored Elmer’s glue.