

## Sensory Activity Ideas

The following activities have been categorised into alerting, organising and calming. You need to consider your child's arousal level at the time and then select the activities depending on what you think they need. For example if they have just had a period of concentration, they likely need an alerting activity followed by an organising and calming activity. If they are anxious, then an organising and calming activity may be beneficial. Activities have different effects on different children, for example, activities with bubbles can be alerting for some children but calming for others so you may need to edit this document for your child and move some of the activities around.

### Alerting Activities

These are great to use with children who have a lower arousal level and for most children after sitting and concentration activities. Make sure you do some type of organising and calming activity after an alerting activity before asking your child to sit back down to concentrate again.

- Bounces on trampette/trampoline/bed.
- Skipping, running, jumping, star jumps.
- Linear swing movements – consider Gorilla Gym <https://gorilla-gym.com/en/product/gorilla-gym-kids-package/>
- Fast bouncing on therapy ball. Peanut balls offer more stability.
- Therapy ball - child sits on the ball whilst you move the ball in different directions.
- Bubbles - blow bubbles and run and chase them, or jump on them on the ground. Use either a ping pong bat or rolled up magazine to swat at the bubbles. Encourage the child to blow bubbles if they can.
- Balancing - using masking tape or electrical tape, make a line on the floor. Child can walk on the line, try with a bean bag on their head. Encourage the child to hold out their arms with palms facing up with a bean bag resting on each hand and walk on the line. Then avoid the tape (the tape is toxic slime!) - let the child jump in a zig zag pattern across the tape, keeping both feet together.

- Use masking tape to create a box for your child to jump into. See how far you can all jump then how high you can jump. Try jumping off sofa into the box. Try different size boxes.
- Hopscotch indoors using masking tape or outdoors using chalk.
- Stepping stones – make using coloured card or [https://www.amazon.co.uk/First-Play-Stepping-Stones-Game-Multi-Colour/dp/B07BB4FDQD/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?dchild=1&keywords=stepping+stones+game&qid=1610046821&sr=8-3](https://www.amazon.co.uk/First-Play-Stepping-Stones-Game-Multi-Colour/dp/B07BB4FDQD/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=stepping+stones+game&qid=1610046821&sr=8-3)
- Create an obstacle course/sensory circuit/sensory path using masking tape – combine above ideas e.g. balance along line, jump across zig zag, jump into the box, 10 bounces on the therapy ball/trampette/bed/sofa, pop as many bubbles as you can using a rolled up magazine and then add some organising activities from the section below to end the circuit/course. Try googling sensory paths.
- Animal actions – print some cards with animal actions e.g. fly like a bat, pounce like a cat, stomp like an elephant etc. Place the cards face down and take it turns to choose one and carry out the action or slide the cards into these dice [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Large-Pockets-Education-Sensory-Square/dp/B08BPJWLPY/ref=sr\\_1\\_8?dchild=1&keywords=pocket+dice&qid=1610042490&sr=8-8](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Large-Pockets-Education-Sensory-Square/dp/B08BPJWLPY/ref=sr_1_8?dchild=1&keywords=pocket+dice&qid=1610042490&sr=8-8)
- Ball games – use a box/bin/basket and throw balls in using different movements (from above the head, with one hand, over the shoulder etc).
- Scooter board on tummy or bottom – try wall push-offs, try using arms to move surfing style [https://www.sensorydirect.com/scooter-board?gclid=CjwKCAiA\\_9r\\_BRBZEiwAHZ\\_v15w8Jjpdml214clRifq19SwpO\\_6zQBbvHnfx0EI-Y61IEeD36esiWaxoCz9YQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.sensorydirect.com/scooter-board?gclid=CjwKCAiA_9r_BRBZEiwAHZ_v15w8Jjpdml214clRifq19SwpO_6zQBbvHnfx0EI-Y61IEeD36esiWaxoCz9YQAvD_BwE)
- Sensory movement walk – go for a walk and agree some fun movement rules e.g. at the end of every road hop 5 times, every time you see a blue car, bend down to touch the floor and jump up as quick as you can etc.
- Cold water play – use favourite toys.
- Drink a frozen drink or chew on an ice lolly.
- Choose cold, crunchy, chewy, sour, tart or spicy foods.

## Organising Activities

These are heavy work activities that involve pushing, pulling, lifting and resistance. Organising means that these activities rarely overload the nervous system and you get a modulating effect that can be calming or alerting but most of these activities tend to be calming.

- 20 second proprioceptive activities:
  - Chair push ups
  - Wall push ups
  - Hand pushes and hand pulls (row row the boat style)
  - Shoulder shrugs
  - Shoulder spirals
  - Hand stars
  - Thumb to finger challenge
  - Stretch resistance band
  - Crab walk (try 'crab football')
  - Bear walk (try bear ball game)
  - Frog hop
  - Snake slither
  - Wheelbarrow walk (over flat surface and work up to going over cushions)
  - Log roll (arms by side or either side of head)
- Jump into a pile of beanbags/pillows/duvets. Can then climb to the top and burrow through it.
- Crawling through tunnels – lycra tunnels coming soon from A Stitch Different. Try pushing a therapy ball through a lycra tunnel.
- Commando crawling.
- Obstacle course combining the ideas above.
- Scooter board - pull a sibling/heavy toy around the room using a rope.
- Oral motor activities - blow football, making and playing musical instruments, see my Facebook page for further ideas.
- Drinking from a sports bottle, drinking through a thin straw or a curly straw or drinking thick drinks through a regular straw.

## Calming Activities

- Music (slower beat).
- Calming scents e.g. lavender (get advice from health food shop/aromatherapist) – can use diffuser e.g. [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Diffuserlove-Essential-Ultrasonic-Aromatherapy-Humidifiers/dp/B08JG2SQF3/ref=sr\\_1\\_10?dchild=1&keywords=aromatherapy+diffuser&qid=1609943632&sr=8-10](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Diffuserlove-Essential-Ultrasonic-Aromatherapy-Humidifiers/dp/B08JG2SQF3/ref=sr_1_10?dchild=1&keywords=aromatherapy+diffuser&qid=1609943632&sr=8-10)
- Lycra wrap (or blanket) standing (not head and neck), arms in or out.
- Consider a body sock <https://www.astitchdifferent.co.uk/services/stitch-body-sock/> and sensory spider <https://www.astitchdifferent.co.uk/sensory-spider/>
- Wrap up and roll in blanket on floor (not head and neck).
- Therapy ball activities:
  - Therapy ball massage lying face down on floor – avoid head and neck, careful over joint behind the knee – check with child how much pressure, stop if they show signs of discomfort.
  - Therapy ball rocking - lie on tummy, rock forwards and backwards – can be good in time to music.
  - Lie with tummy over therapy ball then walk hands forwards then back again.
  - Walk therapy ball up wall – lying down walk ball up using feet then try kneeling to standing.
  - Therapy ball walk – walk the ball up and down the wall using hands or lying down using feet.
- Retreat time with weighted blanket (seek OT advice) <https://www.astitchdifferent.co.uk/services/weighted-blankets/>
- Search Mindfulness videos on YouTube.
- Breathing techniques – search ‘breathing techniques for children’ – try ‘5 finger breathing’ (see diagram at end of page).
- Vibration – try a vibrating pillow or face massager e.g. [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Senseez-SENZ58766-Bumpy-Turtle-Pillow/dp/B00OV3SNRO/ref=sr\\_1\\_8?dchild=1&keywords=vibrating+pillow&qid=1610043077&sr=8-8](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Senseez-SENZ58766-Bumpy-Turtle-Pillow/dp/B00OV3SNRO/ref=sr_1_8?dchild=1&keywords=vibrating+pillow&qid=1610043077&sr=8-8)

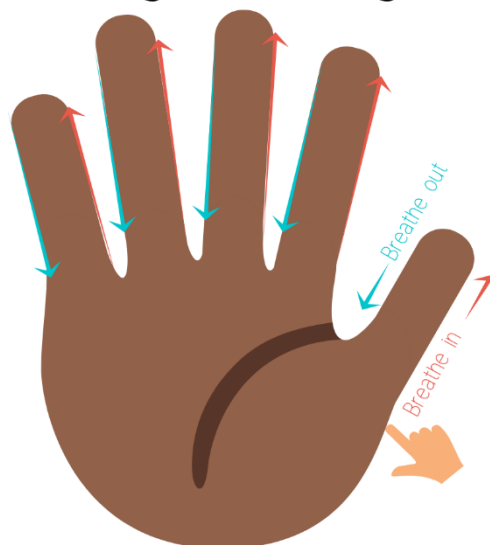
[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Beurer-MG16-Green-Mini-Massager/dp/B002KFZW4W/ref=sr\\_1\\_11?dchild=1&keywords=message+r+hand&qid=1609944188&sr=8-11](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Beurer-MG16-Green-Mini-Massager/dp/B002KFZW4W/ref=sr_1_11?dchild=1&keywords=message+r+hand&qid=1609944188&sr=8-11)

- Warm water play – can use favourite toys e.g. lego, foam numbers.
- Going for a mindfulness walk – focus on something in particular e.g. things that are green or listening for sounds and telling each other what they can hear.
- Story Massage [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Once-Upon-Touch-Massage-Children/dp/1848192878/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=story+massage&qid=1610043182&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Once-Upon-Touch-Massage-Children/dp/1848192878/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=story+massage&qid=1610043182&sr=8-1)
- Foods – sweet, smooth, creamy and warm foods.

### Other Resources

- The OT Toolbox - activity ideas - <https://www.theotttoolbox.com/>
- A Stitch Different Community Interest Company – weighted therapy and compression items - <https://www.astitchdifferent.co.uk/>
- Sensory Stuck at Home – Facebook group with free advice from OTs and others - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sensorystuckathome/>

### 5 Finger Breathing





### Pyramid of Learning

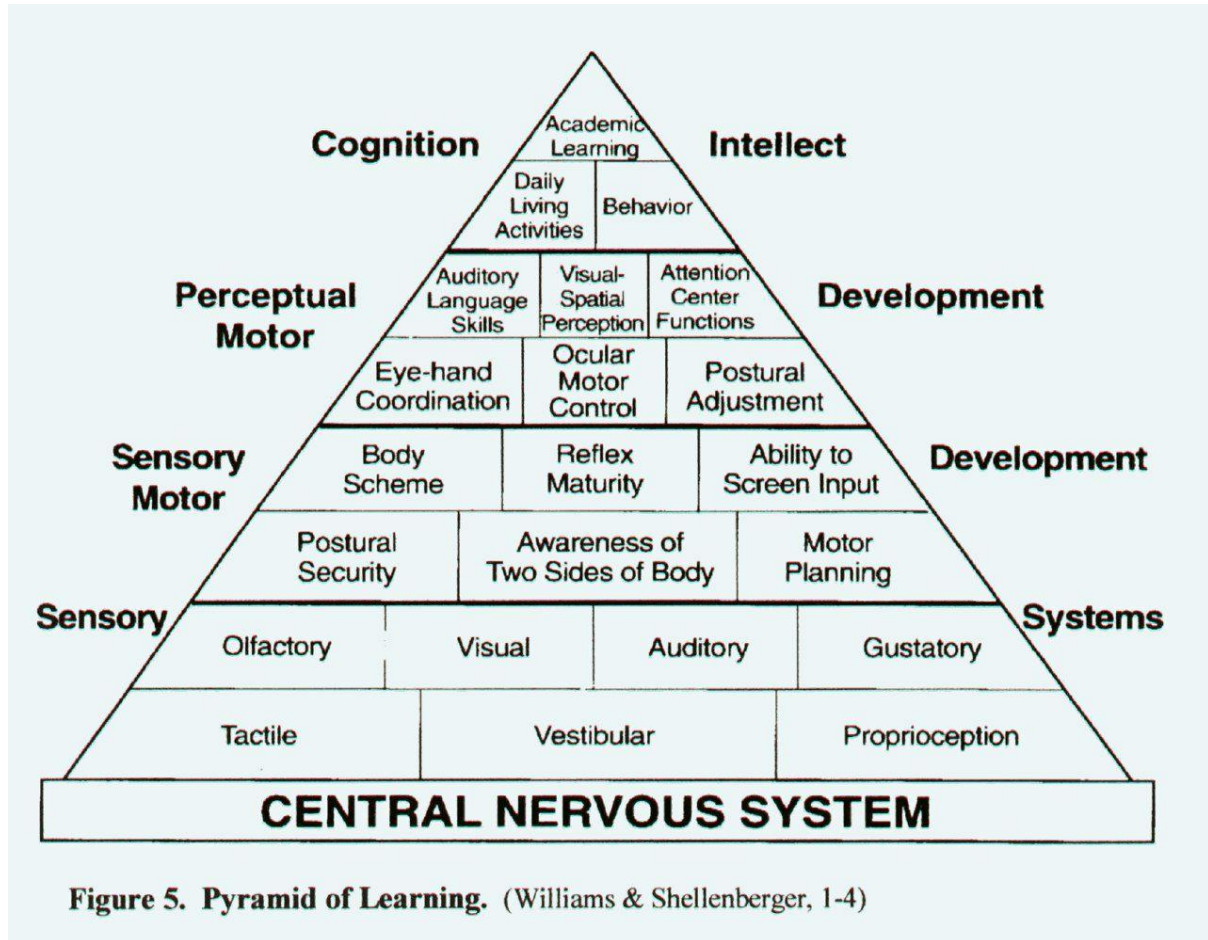


Figure 5. Pyramid of Learning. (Williams & Shellenberger, 1-4)