

Heavy Work Activities List for Occupational Therapist  
Useful for Designing a Sensory Diet for Children with Sensory Processing Disorders  
Compiled and Edited by Elizabeth Haber, MS, OTR/L and Deanna Iris Sava, MS, OTR/L

Following are activities that can be used to design a sensory diet for children with sensory processing disorders. The activities are divided into three sections. The first section lists therapeutic activities the occupational therapist can use during treatment sessions. The second section lists naturally occurring activities found within the school environment. The occupational therapist and school team can use these activities to design a sensory diet for a particular student. The third section lists naturally occurring activities found within the home environment. These activities can be used by the occupational therapist and family to design a sensory diet for home use. Special thanks to all the therapists who openly shared ideas.

Therapeutic Activities (for use by the occupational therapist during treatment sessions)

1. Scooter board activities:

- Push scooter board to or from a designated location (sit or lie on stomach and propel with arms).
  - Have child pull him/herself up a ramp while seated or lying on stomach on a scooter board.
  - Propel scooter board across a carpeted floor.
  - Push the therapist or another person around on a scooter board.
  - Have someone pull a child who is sitting or lying (on his/her stomach) on a scooter board, holding onto a rope or hula hoop.
  - Have one child use a rope or hula hoop to pull another child who is sitting or lying (on his/her stomach) on a scooter board, holding onto the other end of the rope or the hula hoop.
  - Have child pull him/herself (using hand over hand movements) by a long jump rope tied by one end to a doorknob while seated on a scooter board with legs crossed and off the floor. Can also have one child hold one end of a jump rope while another child, who is sitting or lying on a scooter board pulls him/herself with the other end of the rope up to the child holding the rope." A variation is to play "army jungle maneuvers" where the child on the scooter board delivers secret messages to the other child, and that child (who is holding the rope) has to write a secret answer back to the commander (therapist). This could be incorporated into academics in lots of ways. For example, the first child can take a math problem to the second child; the second child solves the math problem and sends it to the commander (therapist).
2. Bounce up a ramp on a Hippity Hop ball. You can use two ramps that fasten together at right angles and let the children hop up one, cross to the platform of the second ramp and hop down. After about 10-15 trips it takes all the "aggressiveness" out of them for the whole day.
  3. Push a large therapy ball across/around the room (can purchase weighted therapy balls).
  4. Play catch with a heavy ball. Bounce and roll a heavy ball.

5. Push square plastic nesting boxes from one room to another. A carpeted hallway provides extra resistance. One or two of the nested boxes can be removed to decrease the weight or small balls and/or bean bags can be added to the box to increase the weight. You can also turn the smallest box upside down over the balls and bean bags to help distracted students complete the task.
6. Push a wheeled therapy stool while someone is seated on it. If necessary, the person on the stool can assist by "walking" with his/her feet.
7. Use bubblepack as part of an obstacle course. Child can jump onto it or run across it.
8. Pull therapist's suitcase on wheels or therapy cart.
9. Walk up a ramp or incline.
10. Use theraband or tubing attached to a door and pull it, then let it snap.
11. Two children can play "tug of war" with jump rope or heavy theraband. (If you use the theraband, children need supervision so they don't purposely let go of theraband and "snap" the other child).
12. Play a game of "play wrestling": pushing game where two people lock hands facing each other and try to see who can push and make the other person step back first. Use other body parts also, but be sure to have rules (no hitting, no biting, no scratching, one person says stop then both stop).
13. Play "row, row, row your boat" sitting on the floor, pushing and pulling each other.
14. Have two children sit on the floor, back to back, with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. They interlock their arms, and then try to stand up at the same time.
15. Make wood projects requiring sanding and hammering.
16. Play jumping games, such as hopscotch and jump rope.
17. Push on large therapy ball with someone else giving resistance from the other side.

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