

## **SENSORY PLAY & FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES**

### **During School Closure**

My sensory play is a list of activities, specifically designed for me that I can do regularly throughout the day. To help me cope with stimulation from the world around me, to either wake me up or calm me down so I am in just the right state for playing, learning, concentrating and carrying out my daily activities such as eating or sleeping. There are some fine motor activities to increase your child's hand strength.






During school closure it is important that all children get time daily to move and continue to develop fine motor skills, please help me to use my sensory play and fine motor activities during the day.







You can do this through:



- Your daily exercise time outside the home – take your child for a walk, let them run (keeping a backpack on them with a chest strap and reins can help you keep them safe when doing this) or if they can let them ride on a push bike
- Sensory play at home (see below)
- Fine motor activities at home (see below)

#### **Sensory Play at home:**

- Place the child's 'sensory play' picture on now/next board or visual timetable (whichever you are using)
- Use a visual timer or stopwatch to tell child how much time they have e.g 1 hour
- Have the activity equipment out in the area and see which the child goes to. If child is not directing himself/herself to anything gently guide child to or initiate one of the activities
- At the end of your sensory play you could help your child understand it is finished by counting down from 10 to 1 out loud and on your fingers, say "sensory play is finished".
- Then put any pictures you have used for the activity into a box and put the sensory equipment away out of sight.

ALERTING ACTIVITIES (to wake me up)		
<b>Jumping</b> <i>This also helps increase my awareness of my muscles and joints</i>	<b><u>Jumping ideas:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- star jumps</li> <li>- jumping over a rope</li> <li>- skipping with a rope</li> <li>- hopscotch</li> <li>- in and out of hoops</li> <li>- jumping on and off a low step or solid box</li> <li>- jumping and crashing onto a padded mat</li> <li>- sack jumping</li> </ul>	
<b>Bouncing</b> <i>Having the head out of midline stimulates the vestibular system</i>	<b><u>Bouncing ideas:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- up and down on a space hopper</li> <li>- round an obstacle courses on a space hopper</li> <li>- on a trampoline</li> </ul>	
<b>Blowing</b> <i>Oral motor stimulation</i>	<b><u>Blowing activities</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Blow bubble in the bath or in a container using a straw. Add food colouring to the water to make it more interesting.</li> <li>- Take a ping pong ball and propel it over a carpet/floor by blowing air onto it through a straw. Hold a race to see who can make it move the fastest.</li> <li>- Blow up balloons and use in overhead slapping games.</li> <li>- Harmonica's, Kazoos, blowing instruments</li> <li>- Blow windmills</li> <li>- Blow Pens- great for practicing letter formations and giving oral-motor input!</li> </ul>	 
ORGANISING ACTIVITIES (to help me focus)		
<b>Funny walks</b> <i>Helps improve body awareness and core stability</i>	<b><u>Animal walks ideas:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- animal walks (bunny hops, crab walks, frog jumps, bear walks, inch worm)</li> <li>- crawling</li> <li>- commando crawling</li> <li>- wheelbarrow walks</li> <li>- tip toe walks</li> <li>- stomping</li> <li>- marching like a soldier</li> </ul>	

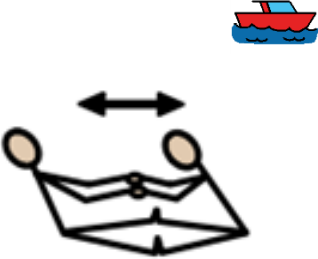

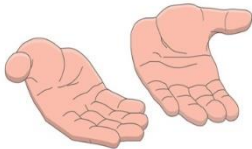



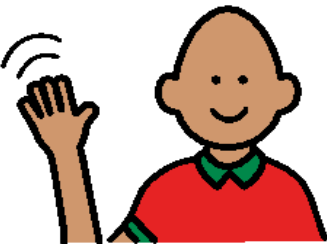

<b>Ball games</b> <i>Increase challenge by changing ball size</i>	<b>Ball game ideas:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- throwing and catching</li> <li>- throwing into a target</li> <li>- kicking</li> </ul>	
<b>Balancing</b>	<b>Balance ideas:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- walk along a line on the floor; try this whilst balancing a book in hands or on head, on tip toes or backwards</li> <li>- walk along a balance beam</li> <li>- balance on a wobble board; try throwing and catching a ball to make it more challenging</li> <li>- walk on stepping stones</li> </ul>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CALMING</b></p>	
<b>Swinging or rocking in a linear direction</b>	<b>Swinging/rocking ideas to try.....</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>over the therapy ball</u></li> <li>• <u>in the playground</u></li> <li>• <u>in a hammock</u></li> <li>• <b>Row row (floor sitting):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Holding child's hands and moving slowly backwards and forwards whilst singing "row row the boat" (pause at points and start again once the child gives verbal/non-verbal prompt)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	 <p>roll over ball</p>   <p>row your boat</p>
<b>Squashes and squeezes</b> <i>Firm, constant pressure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Squash (beanbag/cushion squash):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The child sits on beanbag/cushions</li> <li>-Using another beanbag/cushions squash child firmly</li> <li>-Say "ready, steady.... go" (pause before go and say "go", start again once the child gives verbal/non-verbal prompt)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Squeeze (deep pressure with hands):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The child lies on their back</li> <li>-Folding their legs to chest give a squash and or use your hands to give deep firm pressure down the sides of child's arms and down the sides of the legs (using flat hands, no 'prickly' fingers)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<p><b>Heavy, resistive activities</b></p> <p><i>Can be incorporated into every day routine. The harder the muscles work the more feedback they will be getting</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- carrying shopping/ putting heavy shopping away in cupboards</li> <li>- carry a watering can to water the plants</li> <li>- carrying and hanging out laundry</li> <li>- digging in the garden</li> <li>- sawing and hammering (with close supervision)</li> <li>- washing the car/ cleaning windows</li> <li>- play wrestling/ rough and tumble games/ tug of war</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Chill out zone</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A quiet, calm space that can be used to block out overwhelming stimuli, may include:</li> <li>- calming music</li> <li>- cushions or a large bean bag</li> <li>- soothing lights</li> <li>- fiddle toys</li> </ul>	

## SENSORY PLAY & FINE MOTOR VISUALS

\*Print out and cut out

\*use visuals to support your child's understanding of sensory play/fine motor activities

 <p>row row the boat</p>	 <p>squash</p>	 <p>squeeze</p>
 <p>roll over ball</p>	 <p>sensory play</p>	 <p>fine motor</p>
<p>hello</p> 	<p>goodbye</p> 	

## FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES During School Closure



- Make sure your child assumes a correct sitting posture for ALL written, drawing, scissor and fine motor based tasks. Bottom should be back in seat and both feet placed flat on the floor or on a step. Hips, knees and ankles all at 90 degrees. See the picture for posture prompts.
- A selection of the following activities to be carried out for at least 20 minutes daily at home by parents. Parents to prepare a resource box. Always start with a few “arm wake ups” to warm up.
- Model slowly and clearly to demonstrate the activity to child several times, exaggerating the action needed and speaking very slowly and clearly using gestures and minimal language.
- Use hand-over-hand facilitation to guide child’s hand with your own to lead him/her through an activity; do this a number of times so they can feel the movement.
- Allow lots of opportunities to practice the activity. Present it to child repeatedly, in creative ways, until he/she has mastered it.
- Offer the ‘just right’ challenge - once child has successfully mastered an activity increase the difficulty very slightly by adding an extra element. Praise all his/her efforts and give rewards such as sticker and stars.
- Give a target e.g. ‘lets roll the ball 5 times’ to encourage perseverance and sustained attention, gradually increases/extend targets
- Prepare a set of activities before you sit down with him/her so a new activity can be presented when child starts to lose interest - this will maximise engagement. Encourage child to put activities in a ‘finish’ box or bag when finished with them.

### FINE MOTOR ACTIVITIES

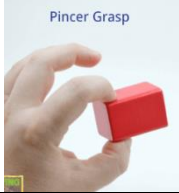





#### Warm up- Arm wake-ups

- ✚ *Shrug your shoulders to your ears then back down.*
- ✚ *Touch the sky, keeping your shoulders down.*
- ✚ *Touch your shoulders – hand to same shoulder*
- ✚ *Touch your shoulders – hand to opposite shoulder*
- ✚ *Push down on the desk*
- ✚ *Hold your hands out, palm up, then palm down*
- ✚ *Push palms together*
- ✚ *Pull hands apart*
- ✚ *Link your hands together and circle your wrists, one way then the other*
- ✚ *Make a fist, thumbs up and give them a wiggle*
- ✚ *Touch each finger to your thumb, one at a time, making a big circle.*



**Shake your hands out – you’re ready to begin!**



<p><b>Fine motor play</b>  <i>Child needs opportunities to develop his/her fine motor skills, and in particular to refine their pincer grasp.</i></p> 	<p><i>Try the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coin or button posting</li> <li>• Block stacking (on a pole first and then free standing)</li> <li>• Threading (larger beads on a pipe cleaner moving on to smaller beads on a thin lace)</li> <li>• Pegs on a peg board</li> <li>• Colouring in shapes and patterns</li> <li>• Connect 4 game</li> </ul>
<p><b>To strengthen arms, hands and fingers</b></p>	<p><i>Try the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russian dolls</li> <li>• Pop beads</li> <li>• Velcro toys</li> <li>• Tug of war games</li> <li>• Manipulating play dough or Theraputty</li> <li>• Retrieving beads from Theraputty</li> <li>• Pulling lids off pens and containers</li> </ul> 
<p><b>Scissors</b>          Cutting is a great task to develop strength in the small muscles of the hand. It is also useful for developing bilateral hand skills (using two hand together cooperatively)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide hand-over-hand assistance to place the scissors correctly in your child's hand using a thumb's up position.</li> <li>• Prompt child to open and close the scissors.</li> <li>• Reduce the level of assistance given as child's skills develop.</li> <li>• Start by snipping straws, firm card or a 'sausage' of theraputty which is much easier than flimsy paper, then move onto thin card and finally paper as skills develop.</li> <li>• Start but just snipping, then move on to cutting short lines, then longer lines and then simple shapes.</li> <li>• Have simple picture to snip/cut, such as legs on an octopus, a mane on a horse, hair on a child etc. to make it more fun.</li> <li>• Ask OT about where to buy adaptive scissors if needed:</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Loop scissors</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Longloop self opening scissors</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Dual control training scissors</p> </div> </div> 

If you would like help using the above therapy ideas at home, please do contact:

By phone: During the school closure period, please call us on our central number at the Northern Health Centre: 0203 316 1892.

By email:

Meroe Dalphinis, Occupational Therapist, The Bridge School: [meroe.dalphinis1@nhs.net](mailto:meroe.dalphinis1@nhs.net)

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