

Play & Proprioception – Pre-school

Proprioception is the information we receive from our muscles and joints that lets us know the position of our body in space without the need to look. Difficulties in this area can present as over active, tripping and bumping into objects and with difficulties in judging force and direction. Proprioceptive activities involve push and pull resistance and can have a calming effect.

Regular sensory input is needed in order for children's brains to support self regulation. If they aren't receiving this regular proprioceptive input, some children find it more challenging to regulate their emotions and subsequently can have more tricky/distressed behaviours.

To support children with feeling regulated and understanding where their body is in space, the inclusion of proprioceptive activities can be beneficial. We have provided a variety of ideas, please choose the ones that are your child's level of development and you think they will enjoy. Please supervise your child when engaging in these activities as this will help you find out which activities work best. Activities work best if carried out in small frequent play sessions throughout the day at home and nursery. Proprioceptive activities can be helpful at night to help children wind down as part of their bedtime routine.

We would recommend trying these out for 10-12 weeks to see if they have a positive impact. If so please continue to make these play activities part of their daily routine.

For further advice please see the contact details below for our parental advice line and professional enquiry line.

Activity Suggestions

- Helping to carry shopping and help put it away
- Participation in cooking activities: mixing, measuring, sifting, kneading, rolling or using cookie cutters.
- Watching TV on tummy or sitting on a space hopper
- Helping with gardening
- Weight-bearing through arms on floor – legs supported on bed/settee, carrying out activities in this position. e.g. Jigsaw puzzle
- Child sandwich – using duvet or mat to wrap up child and apply light pressure
- Giving firm, deep hugs. Take the lead from your child – if your child wants you to stop then respect this and continue if enjoyable and you notice a calming effect



- Playing on playground/park equipment (e.g. climbing)
- Balance activities (jumping/stepping stone activities, Simon says)
- Obstacle course – on hands and knees (indoor and outdoor)
- Animal walks (frog, snake, monkey, crab)
- Active nursery rhymes e.g. Seesaw, Row your Boat, Grand Old Duke of York (download Bookbug App for more ideas)
- Any activities where hands have to work above shoulder height e.g. hanging washing (pretend/real), kite flying, streamers, etc
- Walking – different surfaces e.g. sand, grass, up hills
- Push/pull toys
- Pretending to be Incredible Hulk by standing up from crouched position while you gently slow your child down by pressing down on their shoulders
- Sand play – digging/pouring sand
- Play on bouncy castle/soft play or trampoline
- Play dough: roll, squash, mould, use a rolling pin and cutters.



Parent advice line



Do you have questions about how your child plays, enjoys hobbies, manages at school or looks after themselves (such as concerns about physical abilities, attention or sensory differences)?

Call our advice line and speak directly with an Occupational Therapist.

01592 226699

Occupational Therapy
Monday 12 noon–2pm
Wednesday 10am–12pm



Professional enquiry line for speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy for those working with children and young people.

Call **01383 674055**

Speech and Language Therapy
Monday and Thursday 2–4pm

Occupational Therapy
Tuesday and Thursday 3–5pm

Physiotherapy
Wednesday 3–4pm and Thursday 9–10.30am

