



## **Proprioceptive Input**

The proprioceptive system is located in our muscles and joints. It provides us with a sense of body awareness and detects and controls force and pressure. The proprioceptive system also has an important regulatory role in sensory processing as proprioceptive input can assist in controlling responses to sensory stimuli.

Proprioceptive input can be very calming for those who are easily overwhelmed by sensory stimulation. Additionally, proprioceptive input can be alerting for those who need increased sensory stimulation to facilitate attention and learning. Many children seek proprioceptive input in order to regulate their emotional and behavioral responses to sensory stimulation.

### **Indicators that a child is seeking proprioceptive input**

- Bites/chews on objects e.g. sleeve of shirt, pen/pencil
- Hyperextends joints e.g. bending back fingers, locking knee joints
- Bangs body parts e.g. bangs hands together, bangs jaw with hand
- Holds objects with excessive pressure e.g. pencil; writes heavily on page
- Enjoys rough and tumble play but can be excessively rough with others
- Throws self heavily onto floor
- Prefers to run, jump or stamp heavily when he/she should be walking
- Likes to sit with knees tucked under himself/herself
- Engages in weightbearing activities e.g. swinging on desks, climbing
- Walks on tiptoes

Providing proprioceptive activities can enhance a child's attention and regulation for activities of daily living. These activities will help a child to achieve a calm and alert state which then improves emotional wellbeing and the ability to engage and learn.

### **Ideas for Proprioceptive Activities**

Proprioceptive activities involve providing intensive input to the muscles and joints. Some ideas are provided here but you may wish to develop your own ideas which will suit your child and your daily routines. Think of activities which will work the muscles and joints:

- Weightbearing activities e.g. crawling, push-ups, crabwalking
- Resistance activities e.g. pushing/pulling





- Heavy lifting e.g. carrying books
- Cardiovascular activities e.g. running, jumping on a trampoline
- Oral activities e.g. chewing, blowing bubbles
- Drinking through a straw- the thicker the better- applesauce, yogurt, pudding
- Deep pressure e.g. tight hugs
- Jump and crash- trampoline, couch to cushions, into crash pads
- Running
- Climbing
- Hanging
- Stomping
- Bouncing up and down on therapy ball
- Kicking- balls, stretch bands around chairs
- Squeezing- stress balls, playdough, putty
- Pushups- chair, floor, wall
- Rolling on belly over therapy ball
- Body sock
- Yoga poses

**Heavy Work Activities-** these require kids to use their muscles to push, lift, pull or carry objects that are heavy thus creating resistance which stimulates the proprioception system

- Push and pull heavy objects
  - Laundry basket
  - Wheelbarrow
  - Lawn mower
  - Grocery cart
  - Vacuum
- Carry heavy objects
  - Bags from grocery store
  - Items from pantry or fridge
  - Book bag
  - Loaded boxes
  - Medicine ball
  - Garbage bags and bins
- Dig
- Rake
- Shovel
- Pull on a rope





- Tie it to door knob, tree or swing set
- Tug of war

**Deep Pressure Activities-** these are often passive (someone else is helping provide the input to the child) and provide calming sensations.

- Getting or giving big, deep hugs
- Rolling tightly in a blanket like a burrito
- Sitting with weighted lap pad or weighed toy or wearing weighted vest or other compression clothing
- Lying under heavy objects like couch cushions, bean bags, weighted blankets
- Getting or giving a massage
- Joint compressions
- Use a large ball to “steam roll” over a child’s body
- Sit or stand on a wobble seat or wobble cushion

### Questions?

I am here to help! Contact Jamie via phone or email anytime!

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