



Sensory Enriching Activities

A major function of a pediatric occupational therapists is to help children with their jobs—the job of being a child. Growth, learning, skill acquisition, these are all part of the job of being a child. Young children learn, grow, and gain new skills through play. Exploratory play including learning to walk, run, and climb, learning to take apart and put together, pushes the child’s muscles and neurological system to develop and meet the challenges of daily life.

Underlying even the most basic motor skills is the processing of sensory information. Our sense of sight, sound, taste, touch and smell provide us with important information about the world around us. Our sense of balance, position, and movement tell us where we are in relation to the objects around us, and are critical to developing the motor coordination necessary to perform even the most basic activities. Taking in and processing this sensory information to produce a meaningful response is called sensory integration.

You can create sensory based activities with toys and materials you might already have in your home. Below are activities to help your child explore sensory experiences.

- Search for small objects in shaving cream (i.e. legos, beads, dice)
- Push/pulling heavy objects placed in a laundry basket, stroller or shopping cart.
- Playing catch or bounce a large and/or heavy ball.
- Make homemade play dough (for the recipe, visit: <http://www.momswhothink.com/preschool/playdough-recipe.html>)
- “Freeze Dance” together. Play music and dance with very large movements, but when the music stops, every must freeze!!
- Wash windows using a water spray bottle and wiping with a towel.
- Gather a pile of pillows and jump in!
- Wheelbarrow or crabwalk race

