

General Calming Activities

Your local
healthcare
provider

Sensory input can make a person feel calm, alert, and organised or over alert, disorganised and anxious. A person needs to learn to self-regulate in order to maintain, attain and change alertness levels needed to learn or complete a task.

When self-regulation does not occur, adults can provide activities and situations that help a child attain the right levels of alertness. The sensory strategies can be used to help calm your child before during, or after activities.

The activities suggested aim to help your child remain calm and focused and should not be withheld or used to reinforce particular behaviours e.g. as a reward.

The effects of a Sensory Strategies are usually immediate and cumulative and aim to:

- * Reduce sensory seeking behaviour
- * Increase focus and engagement in activities

Suggested Activities:

- Use low level or dim lighting
- Blowing bubbles
- Deep pressure hugs
- Listening to calm music on headphones
- Rocking chair or sitting in beanbag
- Pulling/pushing/lifting activities
- Joint compressions – applying pressure through feet, wrists, elbows



Providing care on behalf of North East Essex Community Services Collaborative



- Squeezing/stretching objects



- Use vibrating cushion/snake/massager



The following should be noted when carrying out any of the suggested activities:

- Monitor the amount of stimulation that your child receives during a movement activity. Some children cannot pace themselves, resulting in adverse reactions.
- Too much swinging or spinning can result in negative effects such as over activity, nausea, lethargy or changes in heart rate or breathing.
- It is important to monitor the effects and increase/decrease time doing a certain activity as required.
- It is important that sensory activities are completed regularly and consistently in order to be more effective.
- Activities only need to be completed for 5-10 minutes at a time.
- Try and incorporate activities into your child's daily routine. The more regularly you are able to complete activities the better effect the input will have in helping your child to regulate themselves.

Finding the right activities that are right for your child is a matter of trial and error so it is important to monitor their response to activities and adjust accordingly.