



Sensory Calming Strategies

What is Sensory Processing?

We have eight sensory systems that work together to help us understand our bodies and respond to our environment. Sensory processing influences how we move our bodies, learn, and feel safe. Each person processes sensory information differently and has unique responses to sensory experiences. These experiences can be calming or alerting for our body. We can use our sensory preferences to support regulation throughout the day.

How Can an Occupational Therapist Help?

- Further assess your child's sensory processing and help understand their sensory needs
- Find sensory strategies to support regulation

Tactile Ideas

- Pillow sandwich (place your child laying down between two pillows and provide gentle pressure for as long as the child likes or is asking for, add more pressure if child asks for it).
- Burrito blanket (wrap your child tightly in blanket while they are laying down, arms can either be in or out of the blanket depending on what the child requests).
- Warm baths



Olfactory Ideas

- Try calming scents such as lavender, peppermint, rosemary, bergamot orange, or chamomile in a diffuser, as a lotion, as essential oils, or in baths

Auditory Ideas

- Listen to calming music (i.e. Mozart)
- Nature sounds
- Headphones
- Limit distracting noises (i.e. turn down TV)

Visual Ideas

- Create a small tent, cave, or fort "hideout" that provides a quiet atmosphere and a clear visual space
- Dim or natural lighting
- Sensory bottle (see our website for recipe)



Oral Motor Ideas

- Blow bubbles by taking big, deep breaths
- Drink apple sauce, smoothie, yogurt, or other similar consistencies through a straw

Proprioceptive Ideas

- Get your child moving using different forms of movement such as animal walks (examples can be on our website) or yoga (i.e. Cosmic Kids is free on YouTube)

Vestibular Ideas

- Lay upside down
- Swing back and forth in a rhythmic pattern that is controlled by parent or caregiver

Tips When Trying New Strategies

- Pay attention to your child's response
- Discontinue if strategies are causing distress
- Be patient, we all respond differently to sensory strategies

