

STRATEGIES TO HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH *Sensory Challenges*

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SENSORY CHALLENGE: VESTIBULAR

2. SEEKS EXCESSIVE MOVEMENT

INSTRUCTIONS:

The Does Your Child? Section offers educational information about characteristics of children with the above mentioned sensory/behavior challenge. Your child may present with one or many of these characteristics.

The Try This! Section offers simple strategies for helping your child cooperate and develop skills. Not all suggestions are appropriate for every child and family. Only use strategies that apply to your child's age, developmental level, and situation. It is suggested to use this checklist while consulting with a professional who has explained and is monitoring these strategies.

>>> DOES YOUR CHILD?

- Always or frequently seem to be moving.
- Always or frequently seem to be bumping into furniture, people, etc.
- Seem to have poor balance.
- Seek out fast and intense movements. May seem like a "little dare-devil."
- Repeat dangerous movements and like jumping off high surfaces.

>>> TRY THIS!

HEAVY WORK: Offer your child opportunity for what is known as "Heavy Work." These activities provide your child with opportunities to move his/her muscles against resistance. Try the following:

- Carry heavy objects such as carrying groceries, heavy pillows.
- Under an adult's direction, re-arrange household furniture.
- Pulling or pushing objects such as a wagon, heavy laundry basket, or heavy box.
- Digging in the yard or sandbox.
- Use hands to work with dough or clay.
- Play the "sandwich game". Your child lies between two pillows or cushions (the "bread" or "sandwich buns") with his neck and head safely exposed. Ask him which ingredients he would like to make his sandwich. When an additional item is selected (ex: mustard, lettuce), provide some pressure by carefully pressing down on the pillow/cushion.
- Some children calm down when offered gentle pressure to the top of the head.

OFFER OPPORTUNITY FOR SAFE MOVEMENT:

- When at the playground tell your child the rules and expect him/her to follow them. Be a good role model at the playground. Show your child how to correctly use the equipment.
- Use a rocking chair.
- Use a mini-trampoline with close supervision.
- Use a "hippity-hop" ball with supervision.

OTHER IDEAS:

- Wear snug fitting garments/undergarments such as Under Armor.
- Wear a weighted back pack.
- Encourage your child to perform "wall push-ups." Encourage him/her to stand facing a wall, just about his arm's length away. Have your child place his/hands on the wall, keep his feet/knees stable, then slowly bend/straighten elbows.
- Encourage your child to rest in a bean-bag chair. This may help calm your child.
- Offer a thick drink that can be sipped through a straw.