

THE SENSORY DIET

NUTRITION FOR YOUR BODY AND BRAIN



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**WHAT TO DO WHEN
YOUR CHILD CAN'T SIT STILL**

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PROBLEMS AND GOALS

PROBLEMS

My child...

- Slumps in his seat and lies on the table
- Always seems to be wiggly and squirming when he is supposed to sit still
- Constantly gets up out of his chair

GOALS

- Detect your child's unique sensory preferences before and during 'sitting' activities
- Discover how movement may prepare your child for sitting
- Improve posture with dynamic sitting during eating and table top activities



SOLUTIONS

STEP 1 Prior to quiet sitting

Children need good nutrition from food, and they also need sensory experiences for their body and brain. If your child has difficulty sitting still, he may need more movement experiences throughout the day or prior to sitting activities. As a parent, you can encourage and allow your child to move.

Some activities include...

- Up and down movements on a chair ball, trampoline or with a jump rope
- Back and forth movements on a swing, in a rocking chair or stroller
- Activities such as dancing, running, jumping, sliding, rolling
- Helping with chores.



STEP 2 During quiet sitting in a typical chair

If your child tends to wiggle or squirm in his seat, you may need to use a sensory strategy. Firm pressure touch (like a hug) tends to calm and quiet the body.

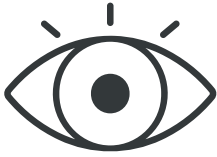
Some strategies include...

- Wearing a heavy coat, weighted vest, or Bear Hug
- Putting something on his lap (book bag, lap tray, heavy pillow)
- Performing a heavy job intermittently throughout the activity.

For additional activities, think about the 7 categories:



HEARING



SEEING



TOUCHING



MOVING



SMELLING



MUSCLES



MOUTH

For example:

A mother needs her small child to sit in the grocery cart. She gives her child a box of raisins to eat while they shop.



As you can see, several of the sensory categories listed above are involved.

The box of raisins (which provides seeing, touching, smelling and mouth tools) helps him to sit still without becoming wiggly or fussy.



STEP 3 During quiet sitting on an unstable surface

Dynamic or active sitting on an unstable surface can provide your child with the little bit of additional movement he may need to maintain attention.

Dynamic sitting prevents ergonomic casualties by...

- Challenging and supporting the spinal muscles and the back
- Facilitating and training the body in an upright posture
- Preventing uneven pressure on vertebral discs
- Preventing constant one-sided strain
- Promoting flexibility of the spine, joints and ligaments
- Enhancing balance
- Encouraging health and, over time, preventing postural deconditioning and back pain

Other dynamic sitting alternatives include...

'T' stools, wedges and inflated disks.

Each item varies in the type of input it provides. Together with your child, find which works best for him.

A NEW WAY OF LEARNING AND THINKING



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