

THE SENSORY DIET

NUTRITION FOR YOUR BODY AND BRAIN



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**CALMING ACTIVITIES OR 'HEAVY
WORK' ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR CHILD**

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INTRODUCTION

What are **Heavy Jobs** and what do they do?

Activities that provide heavy muscle work are frequently used to develop stability for coordination **and** to promote attention, focus and calmness.

Although these are often labelled 'heavy work' activities, we prefer to call them 'heavy jobs'.

Children often appear to be more motivated to do 'jobs' than they are to do 'work'.



GOALS

- Integrate the 'just right' amount of heavy muscle work activities throughout your child's day to meet his unique sensory needs
- Provide your child with opportunities to safely seek and obtain the heavy muscle work he needs through outdoor play and indoor games
- Select helpful chores that use heavy muscle work activities, to increase focus and improve social skills. Choose heavy jobs he likes to do

SOLUTIONS

Together with your child and family, choose activities which work for you outdoors, indoors, during playtime, work time, mealtime, bath time and bedtime

You may find it helpful to make a list from the following pages and post it on your refrigerator



JOBS & CHORES

INSIDE

- Put groceries away. Include some low shelves where he needs to be on his hands and knees
- Take the cushions off the sofas, vacuum under them, then put them back
- Mop or sweep the kitchen floor
- Help dust the furniture
- Clean the windows or the front of appliances (spray bottles are great for hand muscles!)
- Carry the laundry basket
- Change the sheets on the bed, then toss the linens down the stairs
- Rearrange the bedroom furniture



OUTSIDE

- Sweep the porch or driveway
- Do yard work (rake leaves, mow the lawn)
- Shovel sand into a wheelbarrow, wheel the wheelbarrow to a spot, dump out sand and use a rake to level it out (functional for filling in low spots in backyard)
- Carry buckets to water flowers, plants, trees
- Recycle (carry a box of cans or newspapers)
- Pull a heavy trashcan
- Stack the patio chairs
- Wash the car
- Bathe the dog
- Perform wood projects requiring sanding and hammering

PLAY TIME

INSIDE

- Push or pull a box with toys or a few books in it
- Play 'cars' under the kitchen table where your child is on hands and knees pushing the car in one hand while weight bearing on the other hand
- Play 'row, row, row your boat' both sitting on the floor, pushing and pulling each other
- Play 'magic carpet' (pull someone on a sheet, blanket or small rug)
- Bounce on a mini trampoline or on a 'chair ball' while holding its legs
- Climb on pillows, hide under them, jump and 'crash' into them, pull them up the stairs
- Play 'pillow fight'
- Fall into a beanbag chair
- Do the army crawl and animal walks (crab walk, bear walk)
- Play 'sandwich games' where your child places you between beanbags, sofa cushions, mattresses and applies light pressure top top layer
- Be a pizza and have your child slowly roll a ball over you, applying pressure



PLAY TIME

OUTSIDE

- Fill up big toy trucks with heavy blocks, push with both hands to knock things down
- Play in a sandbox with damp heavy sand
- Colour a 'rainbow' with large paper or with sidewalk chalk while your child is on his hands and knees
- Jump over or climb inside inner tubes
- Play catch with a heavy ball
- Play 'tug of war' with a jump rope
- Roll or sled down a hill
- Swing from the monkey bars and climb on playground equipment
- Participate in activities such as gymnastics, horseback riding, karate, pulling self up climbing walls



REMEMBER FUN AND SUCCESS ARE KEY!

TRANSITIONS

- Push heavy doors using both hands
- Carry groceries into the house
- When travelling, let your child pull his own suitcase on wheels



MEAL TIME

- Mix and knead cookie dough
- Help cook with an onion chopper (or other simple and safe kitchen utensils)
- Push or pull chairs in/out from the table
- Wipe the table after dinner with a large sponge and use hand muscles to squeeze
- Sip applesauce or thick milkshake through a straw



HOMEWORK TIME

- Chew gum, eat chewy foods or crunchy foods, or sip water from a water bottle with a thin straw
- Do chair push ups
- Say 'let's pretend to make the room bigger' and push against the walls

BATH TIME

After a bath, rub your child briskly with a large heavy towel, firmly squeezing his muscles.

He can help fold the towel when done.



BEDTIME

- Help fold a heavy quilt
- Wear tight flannel or soft snug pyjamas
- Go 'camping' with a heavy blanket pulled across a few chairs. Your child can help set up and take down the blankets
- Change the sheets on the bed.



A NEW WAY OF LEARNING AND THINKING

