

# Tips for Enhancing Sensory Experiences

Sensory play provides opportunities for your child to use their senses as they explore their world. These experiences help build connections in the brain's pathway and are crucial for brain development!



## General

- ♥ Encourage manipulative play, such as using play dough, LEGOs, puzzles, pegboards, beads, and board games to improve the child's eye-hand coordination and dexterity.<sup>2</sup>
- ♥ Promote imaginative or pretend play with things like dolls and stuffed animals, toy furniture, and telephones to encourage creativity and role playing.<sup>2</sup>
- ♥ Visit places that offer a variety of sensory experiences (e.g., parks, interactive exhibits).<sup>1</sup>

## Visual

- ♥ Use reading books with simple and large pictures.
- ♥ Use colored bins for organization of toys and materials.
- ♥ Provide your child with visual sensory toys (e.g., glitter bottle, lava lamp).

## Auditory

- ♥ Play fast music to help alert your child or slow music to help them focus.
- ♥ Sing songs to practice verbal directions (e.g., Ring Around the Rosie, Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes).
- ♥ Turn off the TV during play, so that your child can focus on your voice instead of the background noise.

## Movement

- ♥ Offer plenty of opportunities throughout the day for movement (e.g., running and chasing, riding the child in a laundry basket, rocking chairs).
- ♥ Encourage sensory rich play by using balls, sand and water toys, slides, swings, and finger paints.<sup>2</sup>

## Heavy Work

- ♥ Select heavier objects for playing<sup>1</sup> (e.g., playing with couch cushion – climbing over and finding toys underneath).
- ♥ Have your child push/pull a laundry basket loaded with stuff animals.

### References:

- 1 - Dunn, W. (2014). *Sensory profile 2: User's manual*. Bloomington, MN.: Psych Corp.
- 2 - Learning through play. (2012). Retrieved from <https://www.aota.org/about-occupational-therapy/patients-clients/childrenandyouth/play.aspx>.