

Activity Sheets for Kids of All Abilities: Proprioceptive System

ACTIVITIES TO ENRICH THE PROPRIOCEPTIVE SYSTEM

The proprioceptive system provides us with information about where our body is in space. This system is related to motor functions such as motor planning and discriminating how hard or how soft to perform a task. Activities that require resistance or are thought of as “heavy work” are typically giving input to the proprioceptive system with this system’s “receptors” found primarily in the joints and muscles. Following are activity suggestions which provide proprioceptive stimulation, thereby enriching this system, to support overall sensory processing. Good sensory processing is necessary for children to adapt to their environmental demands at home, in school, and in the community.

- Jumping on a trampoline or jump roping.
- Push ups which can be done on the floor, against a wall from a standing position, or pushing up on the arms of a chair to raise self off the seat.
- Carrying heavy objects or pushing/pulling a wagon or cart with heavy objects inside such as books, weights, or even a friend or sibling!
- Pushing against a large therapy ball or wall.
- Playing “tug of war” with friends or a parent.
- Pulling on resistive exercise bands or tubing. These can be held in hands and pulled apart or one end can be attached to a doorknob, or similar stationary object, and the band can be pulled away from the doorknob.
- Pedaling a bike, tricycle, or stationary bike. The more pedaling required, the more proprioceptive input!
- Wheelbarrow walking, animal walks such as the “bear walk” or “crab walk”, and playing leapfrog.
- Add small ankle weights, wrist weights, or loaded backpack to everyday activities to provide more resistance during everyday movement.
- Playing ball with a heavy ball such as a medicine ball or a water balloon.
- Climbing activities such as up a slide ladder, up the slide itself, and playground climbing structures.
- Gymnastics and tumbling activities which can be done at home or as part of a community program.
- Pool play and swimming.
- Bouncing on a hippity hop ball. Stationary bouncing is good but bouncing forward for several feet is even better!
- Select toys that inherently provide resistance/heavy work. These include things like pop tubes, magnet blocks, bristle blocks, snap together/pull apart toys, VELCRO® blocks, play dough, and clay.
- Drinking thickened liquids (yogurt, smoothie, milkshakes, applesauce) through a straw requires a strong suck to pull the liquids through. The thinner the diameter of the straw, the harder the task but the stronger the proprioceptive input!