

PROPRIOCEPTION



Proprioception is the information that we get from muscles and joints to tell us where our body is in space. Activities that include **heavy muscle work**, such as **pushing, pulling or carrying**, give us lots of proprioception.



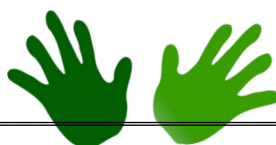
These activities can help a highly sensitive child to calm, or can increase alertness in children who take their time to get going. They aim to get the child's 'arousal' levels just right.



They can be used to calm a child when they need to be more focused eg. before doing homework, or when they are becoming wound up. They also help to improve body awareness and therefore coordination. Proprioception has an 'organising' effect on sensory information that the body receives.



Variety is important – Vary the proprioceptive activities throughout the day to keep challenging the children. Bodies 'habituate' (get used to) a sensation so changing the activities regularly reduces this happening and so the input continues to be stimulating.



PROPRIOCEPTION ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Wall presses – lean on the wall pressing firmly with both hands – press for 20 seconds. Try to ‘push the wall over’. Try having ‘push stations’ with handprints on the wall.
- Pushing and pulling – such as pulling a wheeled suitcase or pushing a trolley or wheelchair.
- Going on weighted walks – either with a backpack (no more than 10% of child’s body weight), weighted belt or ankle weights.
- Using playdough or other resistive materials like pastry.
- Crashing into beanbags or crash mats.
- Rough and tumble play – ‘squashing’ them with a heavy blanket or cushion and asking them to wriggle free.
- Playing tug of war type games.



- Digging in sand.
- Climbing.
- Swimming – Moving against resistance, pushing against a float or collecting weights.



- Using monkey bars or dangling from climbing frames.
- Stretching against resistive materials such as body socks or theraband.
- Helping to clean up, such as wiping tables, tidying up, moving equipment.



- Cycling or scooting a ride on toy
- Joint compressions – Only complete under guidance of a therapist.

- Giving firm hugs.
- Water play – lifting up jugs, teapots etc to play pouring games.
- Chewing – use of chewy tubes, crunchy/chewing snacks.
- Sucking thick liquids through straws, or drinking out of sports bottles.
- Deep breathing techniques.



PROPRIOCEPTION ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Weight bearing through arms by rolling over a gym ball and doing 'wheelbarrow' walks or handstands if able.