Sensory Skills

Grade Level:
Preschool - Elementary

Curriculum:
General Education & Alternate Curriculum

Targeted Skills:
Gross motor, Praxis, Sensory processing

OT Home Activities
Balance Walk & Hopscotch

Materials:
• Masking tape for inside
• Sidewalk chalk for outside

Directions:
1) Place tape on floor in shape of a maze or different directions. Have child walk along the tape on the floor. They can pick up “treasures” along the way to put into their “treasure chest.”

2) Draw lines outside using side-walk chalk. Have the child walk along the lines to pick up treasures (leaves, rocks etc.).

3) Draw hopscotch board outside and jump to the numbers, feet together or apart.

Modifications/Adaptations:
• Hold child's hand to help with balance
• Straight path to make it easier
• Complex path to make it more difficult

How to incorporate into family routine:
• Have sibling draw the balance beam or maze
• Have sibling assist with placing treasures
**Grade Level:**
Preschool - Grade 1

**Curriculum:**
General Education & Alternate Curriculum

**Targeted Skills:**
Gross motor, Sensory processing, Arousal regulation

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**OT Home Activities**

**Box Car**

**Materials:**
- Empty box, laundry basket, or suitcase
- Objects around the house

**Directions:**
1) Have your child push the box/basket around and pick up materials around the house. They can pretend to be a train, trash truck, etc.

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**Modifications/Adaptations:**
- Use an empty pillowcase. Fill with stuffed animals and have child carry up and down stairs, around house, pretending they are riding the bus going to school.
- Push across a rug or carpet to make it harder.
- Push box/basket with feet

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**How to incorporate into family routine:**
- Ask child to push groceries from the front door to the kitchen
OT Home Activities

Calming Corner/Chill Zone

Grade Level:
Preschool - High School

Curriculum:
General Education & Alternate Curriculum

Targeted Skills:
Sensory Processing, Self-regulation

Materials:
- A space in a room, can add bean bags, couch cushions, blankets, pillows, lava lamp, etc.

Directions:

1) Make a space in a small corner or area of the home with materials to help child calm.
2) You can use a tent, a bean bag or pillow for the child to sit on or in.
3) You can use this as a reading corner
4) You can also have toys your child can squeeze such as a soft ball or favorite toy

Modifications/Adaptations:

- Use different textures, tent, etc.
- You can drape a blanket over 2-3 chairs to make a tent

How to incorporate into family routine:

- Family can all take a break at the same time
- Use calming corner for reading time with parent or sibling
Grade Level:  
Preschool - Elementary

Curriculum:  
General Education, Alternate Curriculum

Targeted Skills:  
Sensory processing, Visual motor skills

Directions:
1) Spread shaving cream over the surface of a tray
2) Model drawing lines, shapes, numbers, letters, and/or words in the tray

Materials:
- Shaving Cream
- Cookie sheet tray
- Paint brush
- Q-tips

Modifications/Adaptations:
- Use paint brush or q-tip if student is not comfortable touching shaving cream
- Have student connect the dots if in preschool

How to incorporate into family routine:
- A sibling can model, call out shapes, letters, etc.
**Grade Level:**
Preschool - Grade 1

**Curriculum:**
General Education & Alternate Curriculum

**Targeted Skills:**
Gross motor, Sensory processing, Arousal regulation

**Materials:**
• Pillow or backpack

**Directions:**
1) Place a pillow on child’s back or have them wear their backpack
2) Ask student to crawl around like a slow turtle looking for food or water

**Modifications/Adaptations:**
• Use a smaller or bigger backpack
• Have your child see how far they can crawl before it falls off
• Carry the toys on back from one place to another

**How to incorporate into family routine:**
• Incorporate when your child is cleaning up their toys. They can carry the toy on their back.
Grade Level: Preschool - Elementary

Curriculum: General Education, Alternate, & Creative Curriculum

Targeted Skills: Sensory processing, Balance

Materials:
- Large cardboard boxes found in home
- Recycling bin
- Tape
- Optional: holiday lights, pillows, art supplies

Directions:

1. Collect large cardboard boxes

2. Remove taped seams to open top and bottom of the boxes

3. Position opened boxes sideways

4. Attach box ends to one another by connecting smaller openings into larger openings or use tape

5. Arrange tunnels on floor in different ways and crawl through
 Modifications/Adaptations:

- Listening for sounds: peeling tape, drum on boxes with hands or kick boxes with feet
- Assemble opened boxes in triangle for wheelchair access

- Add light into tunnels using strands of holiday lights attached to ceiling of tunnels

- Decorate tunnels with crayons, markers, stickers, etc.
- Add pillows and blankets to make calm space
- If child requires maximal help for project, put him/her in charge of operations: give choices of box positioning, decoration colors, etc.

How to incorporate into family routine:

- Family free play
- Sensory break in between academic activities
- Hide puzzle pieces, Legos, and/or shapes in tunnel
- Use as calming area before bedtime
**Sensory Skills**

**Grade Level:**
Preschool - Elementary

**Curriculum:**
General Education, Alternate & Creative Curriculum

**Targeted Skills:**
Visual skills, Visual-motor integration, Self-regulation

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**OT Home Activities**

**DIY Light Box**

**Materials:**
- Clear see-through storage tub and lid
- String of lights
- Sheets of white paper
- Tape

**Directions:**

1) Put lights in storage tub

2) Tape white paper on inside of lid

3) Lid on storage tub, plug in, add objects to top

**How to incorporate into family routine:**
- Complete worksheets/drawing activities on light box
- Use for added visual supports to locate puzzle pieces, Legos, beds, etc.

**Modifications/Adaptations:**
- Place puzzle pieces, shapes, toys, and clear-colored cups and lids on light box
- Use as tracing light
OT Home Activities
Sponge Play

Grade Level:
Preschool - Elementary
Curriculum:
General Education & Alternate Curriculum
Targeted Skills:
Fine motor skills, Sensory processing

Materials:
- Clean sponges (can also use small towels or rags)
- Parent can cut a large sponge into smaller pieces shapes
- Containers to squeeze water into and for dry sponges
- Scissors (parent can cut if child is small)
- Optional: food coloring, paint and paper

Directions:
1. Explore the materials being used. Introduce dry sponges and allow child to feel sponge texture. Then have child place his/her hand into the water to feel the difference in sensation.

2. Place sponges into one container filled with water.

3. Have child reach in and push sponge to the bottom to absorb more water then remove and squeeze sponge over empty container.

4. Dip dry sponges into paint and make pictures
Modifications/Adaptations:

• Add food coloring to container of water
• Place small items that float into the empty container. As water is poured into the container, child can watch objects rise to the top.
• Using smaller sponges will require less force, however it will increase the time required to fill the container with water.

To make this activity easier:

• For smaller children allow them to use both hands to squeeze the sponge, especially if you are using rags or small towels.
• Use larger, more pliable sponges

To make this activity more difficult:

• Use a variety of sponges and squeeze from top to bottom using only one hand. Rags and small towels will also increase the amount of force required to get all the water out.
• Parent can also have child use thumb, index and middle fingers to squeeze the sponges.

How to incorporate into family routine:

• The family can assist in this activity by giving each person a job related to the activity. They can make it a race to see who can fill their container the fastest or who can come up with the best instructions or sentences related to the items involved.
OT Home Activities
Lid Matching & Assembling

Grade Level:
Preschool - Elementary

Curriculum:
Alternate & Creative Curriculum, Extended VI

Targeted Skills:
Bimanual skills, Tactile discrimination, Grasp, In-hand manipulation, Proprioceptive processing

Materials:
- Clean, non-glass containers. Examples:
  - Twist-top bottle/mayonaise jar
  - Pull-top coffee tin
  - Food storage containers

Directions:
1. Collect 2 or more containers of different types
2. Remove lids and place containers and lids within child’s reach
3. Child matches and assembles

Modifications/Adaptations to Activity:
- Use more or less containers and lids
- Adult help place lid in position on container, then child presses or screws on
- Child places lid in position on container, then adult presses or screws on
- If child has spasticity of arm, position container between elbow and middle of body for control and independence
- Adult give Hand-Under-Hand help (Click here for video example)

Additional Parent Resources:
Click here for 30 ways to reuse empty bottles!

How to Incorporate into Family Routine:
- Organize containers found in cabinets
- Before taking out recycling bin
- After washing dishes