



Proprioception: Overview and Activities

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 e.g. before doing homework, or when they are becoming wound up. They also help to improve body awareness and therefore coordination.



Variety is important!

Vary the proprioceptive activities throughout the day to keep challenging the children.

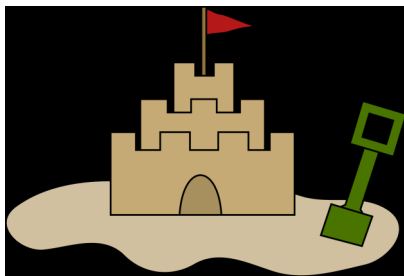
Bodies 'habituate' (get used to) a sensation so changing the activities regularly reduces this happening and so the input continues to be stimulating.

Proprioception has an 'organising' effect on sensory information that the body receives.



Use different types of play!

- > Digging in sand
- > Water play
- > Using playdough or other resistive materials like pastry.

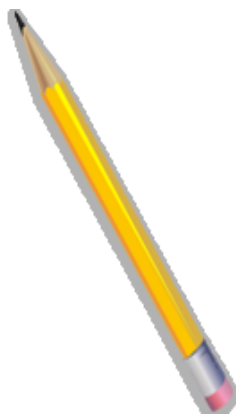


Someone who lacks proprioceptive feedback may:

- > Tire quickly
- > Appear clumsy
- > Be un-coordinated
- > Lack an awareness of force eg. Be heavy footed and handed
- > Slouch and have poor postural control
- > Struggle with complex 'fiddly' fine motor tasks
- > Be delayed in gross motor skills

Think about what activities you might to do. Write a list, for example:

- > Wall presses
- > Swimming
- > Horse riding
- > Yoga
- > Gymnastics
- > Gardening



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.



Swimming - Moving against resistance, pushing

against a float or collecting weights.

Crashing into beanbags or crash mats.



Rough and tumble play - 'squashing' them with a heavy blanket or cushion and asking them to wriggle free.