



Heavy Work Activities for School

Heavy work is beneficial for all children and young people but is particularly calming for those with sensory differences because it provides additional proprioceptive input. Participating in proprioceptive activities has a regulating effect on our sensory system, allowing our bodies to organise itself for useful activity. It can also help to calm a distractable and over alert child or young person as well as increase alertness in an under alert child, which prepares them for other activities. They can also help to reset a day by providing a much-needed sensory break during the school day.

Heavy Work Activities in the Classroom and Around the School

You can incorporate heavy work throughout their day with these activities which can be done within the school or even the classroom. Try to allow them five to ten minutes of activity to allow their sensory system to regulate itself.

- Erase the whiteboard or blackboard. Washing the boards.
- Sharpen pencils using a manual pencil sharpener.
- Fill small boxes or crates with books and take them to another classroom. Carry books or a weighted box around the school. Make sure the children can carry them easily.
- Move packs of paper for the printer/photocopier.
- Staple paper, particularly to the notice board.
- Stack chairs. Take down the chairs at the start of the day. Place chairs on the desks at the end of the day.
- Rearrange desks or furniture in the classroom.

- Help the PE teacher move mats, carry equipment such as balls, arrange benches, hang items up, help set up and tidy away the equipment.
- Open and hold doors open for people.
- Help the janitor empty the bins or brush the floors.
- Climb on playground equipment.
- Push the lunch cart.
- Pass books or pencils out in class or collect them.
- Run around the track or around the playground.
- Wear a backpack with a few books in it during times of transition or when sitting.
- Before handwriting, do some warmups. Warm up hands by pressing palms together, pulling and pressing on each fingertip, press palms against the desk or add a little playdough activity incorporating pinching and rolling.
- Use large bean bags for downtime/reading where they can squish themselves onto the bags to give them extra deep pressure.
- If there is a gardening project in school, have them dig in the dirt.
- Complete mini workout incorporating chair push-ups, wall push-ups, chair dips and squats. Teach the use of wall push-ups or the idea of "the room feels small this morning, can everyone help me push the walls out" for younger students.

Equipment

- Use a “move n sit” cushion on their chair/floor.



- Tie Theraband around their chair legs that they can kick their legs into.



- Use lap buddies and shoulder wraps when seated.



- Oral motor chews or chewy sweets that take awhile to eat and don't get stuck on the furniture.



Further resources:

For more resources to help with developing skills or for further helpful tips and tricks, please visit our website or lookout for our Facebook posts.

www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/cypot

www.facebook.com/CYPOTNHSBorders

