

## Therapy Connect Webinar: Low Budget Sensory Tools for Home and School

### Therapy Connect Notes and Links to Resources and Information

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#### What are the Senses?

- **Proprioception** (our sense of where and how much we move and use our muscles, taken from the joints and muscles in our bodies) sometimes referred to our deep touch sense
- **Vestibular** (our sense of registering motion in relation to gravity)
- **Tactile** (our sense of touch, sometimes referred to as light touch)
- **Visual** (our sense of what and how much we can process through our eyes to our processing centre in the brain)
- **Auditory** (our sense of what and how much we can process through our ears to our brains)
- **Olfactory** (our sense of what and how much we can process through our noses to our brains)
- **Gustatory** (our sense of what and how much we can process through our mouths to our brains)
- **Interception** (our sense of hunger, pain, breathing, toileting, our feelings within the systems of our internal bodies)

#### What can sensory tools offer?

- Extra input from their environment, to block out some sensations
- Decrease sensory input from their environment
- By providing sensory tools the child is able to get their sensory needs met with minimal distraction to either themselves or others
- The child learns ways to recognise when to use a sensory tool, and for how long.

#### Links and Resources for Sensory Input:

##### Proprioception (push pull and squish):

- Big piece of lycra; Make into a tunnel, a body sock or just leave it as a big square to tuck the kids into bed with, or wrap them up like a hotdog
- Therapy ball/fit ball to roll over the child
- Backpack; put some heavy bottles of water in the backpack when you are going to the shops, or a special event. 1-2kg is just 1-2Litres of water.
- Out on a shopping trip, have them carry a basket, fill it with a water bottle or cans of fruit while they walk around with you.
- Heavy work around the house or school. Have them stack chairs, sweep and vacuum.
- [stretchies for movement](#)
- [no sew crash mat](#)
- [make a DIY weighted blanket](#)
- [no sew weighted blanket](#)



- [extra-long pillow](#)
- [pool noodle activities](#)
- [weighted medicine ball video](#)
- [example of making a pressure vest](#)
- [how to make a scooter board](#)

**Vestibular** (rock, swing and spin):

- Tyre swings, regular swings at a park all do the same job! Change up position on the swing, take some skittles down and have them knock over the skittles while swinging, or pick up objects and try to throw them into a bucket.
- Balloon tennis, with a cardboard bat and balloon
- [tennis racket craft](#)
- [IKEA](#), Temple and Webster and other sites have the pod swing for under \$90 for home installation
- [Bilibo](#) [Bilbo video](#) [Purchase Bilbo](#)
- [DIY Balance Boards](#)

**Tactile** (touch and feel):

- Coloured rice and coloured spaghetti, shaving cream
- Buckets of rice, lentils or corn. Some clients get a very large plastic storage container and fill that up with beads, lentils, rice, or corn and the kids jump in.
- You can make your own sensory mats, grab different materials, velvets, sequins, teddy fur, carpets for example. Sew or glue them with hot glue on to a large piece of material, or doona cover and use this for a tactile game, find all the ones you like, the ones that are smooth, or rough
- Marble in the maze squares are popular and addictive! [How to sew a marble maze](#)
- Make your own squeeze toys out of balloons and rice, or sand, my favourite is flour
- [Make stress balls kids will love](#)

**Visual** (bright lights and busy environments):

- Glitter jars, with water/glue/oil colouring and put glitter, sequins and whatever else you might find. [DIY Calming Glitter Jars](#)
- Eco glitter [Eco Glitter](#)
- Blocking out light can be as easy as buying a tent preferably a dark one, or a material tepee, or you can make your own with a hula hoop some string and a curtain of any kind e.g. shower curtain [make a quiet tent](#)

**Auditory** (sounds, the expected and unexpected!):

- DIY rain stick, buy packs on Etsy for \$30 or make yourself [make a rain stick](#)
- Drums
- Industrial headphones [protector junior ear phones](#) or [ear defenders](#)
- Listen to music
- Helpful tips for the classroom: Consider seating in classroom, sometimes near white noise e.g. a fan/heater can be helpful, and a position with unpredictable noises can be unhelpful like near a window or door



**Gustatory** (taste and texture):

- Chewy foods, frozen foods, crunchy foods
- Pawpaw ointment on the lips, mixed with a bit of peppermint or vanilla, rose, orange or almond oil. [home-made lip balm](#)
- Oral input – thick drinks through a straw, or using a thin straw for all drinks ( you can buy metal straws now like these [metal straws](#))

**Olfactory** (what is that smell?) **Links and Resources:**

- DIY scented bead bracelets
- [make a diffuser bracelet](#)
- Or just use vanilla orange or almond oil on a piece of cloth that can be put in a pocket

**Interoception** (pain, temperature, hunger, toileting and breathing):

- A timetable is your most helpful tool
- Water bottle and cover, cold packs
- Make your own packs with wheat or beans, lavender [make own packs](#)

**Disclaimer:**

Sensory Processing is a complex area. This information is provided on the assumption that the children you are providing sensory tools for have been connected with an occupational therapist who has assessed their individual sensory processing and mapped out helpful sensory strategies.

**About Therapy Connect**

[Therapy Connect](#) is a therapy service providing high quality teletherapy supports online using videoconferencing. Occupational Therapists assess a child's individual sensory processing and work with families, educators and carers to individualize supportive sensory strategies to aim at increasing participation in daily activities (home, school, play).

Contact us at [Therapy Connect](#) to arrange a free 30 min consultation with a therapist to learn more about how we may be able to assist you.

