

Sensory Motor Activity Bank

Strategies to nurture a young child's wholesome sensory motor development in the pandemic.

Remember the times when we used to step out from our homes regularly and were exposed to an enormous amount of sensory input from the outside world? Be it that long tight hug from your loved ones or hustling to get into that crowded metro or that garden-fresh scent setting your mood just about right. Often we did not particularly notice all those different textures or the various smells and sights we were exposed to. Well, all those inputs play a role in our sensory diets. ***Yes! Food is not the only diet that our body needs!***

When we are awake, our senses are receiving input at all times, and our brain is processing these sometimes beyond our awareness. That is why a smell that you become aware of, suddenly sparks a childhood memory, or the sight of a favorite dish makes you experience the taste and crave and salivate.

For very young children especially, **sensory-motor development forms the foundation of later development**, growth and learning in their environment. Further, sensory motor functioning has an impact on children's language, communication and play skills. However, since the pandemic began, we are forced to live in confined spaces, and the amount and nature of sensory input and motor stimulation accessible to our children has changed. Following are a few suggestions for activities that you can engage in at home, with your little ones, to build on their overall sensory-motor experiences.

- 1. Sensory play:** Sensory play offers children the opportunity for self-expression and exploration. As it is unstructured, open-ended and not result-oriented, it is the purest form of exploratory learning. Let your child get messy by giving them some dry flour in a bowl/tub; allow them to explore by touching it, smelling it, tasting etc. You can also add some water to it and let your child squish it, knead, mix it etc.

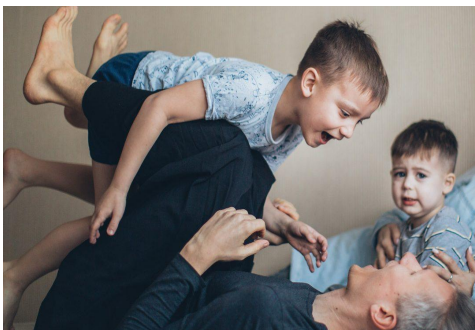


Variations for toddlers and preschoolers

- Hide some of your child's favorite toys/objects in a tub of flour/sooji. Play a game where you take turns to find different objects together.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ztn9bbZ9DTo&t=181s>
- You can knead flour together with your preschooler and involve them in making different shapes with it e.g. animals, balls of different sizes, making rotis for everyone etc.
- Make a path with different textured mats (soft, rough, bumpy, spiky etc.) at home and let your child walk on that path.

2. Movement games:

The act of tilting, inverting and rotating the head activates the vestibular system regularly. This is the system that helps us to know our body in space when static and it's balance, direction, speed and smoothness while moving with respect to gravity. It helps us to sit or stand still in a moving car/bus/elevator, to maintain upright posture with movement, to give us automatic self-protective mechanisms with sudden change.



Play some gentle movement games with your baby wherein you rock them, sway them, or give them gentle up-down movements.

Variations for toddlers and preschoolers:

- Depending upon your child's inclination, you can also play some rough-housing games with them e.g. lying down on your back, positioning your child on your shins, and making them fly like an airplane; playing a game of running from end of the room, and crashing on a beanbag/stack of pillows/mattress on the other end.

- Involve children in creating their own obstacle path at home, using chairs, stools, tables of different heights. You can also use a mattress/few pillows stacked together to create a crash pad for them. Make it a fun family experience by creating a theme around it e.g. a jungle theme/commando theme/crossing an obstacle path to find a treasure etc.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_HMAW1PdNE

- Dancing time: setting aside time for a good dance routine, or some goofy family dancing game, and/or slow dancing and swaying with soft music.

- Home swing: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwL_M0fee_o

3. **Deep Pressure and Massage time:** Give your child tight hugs and cuddles, wrapping them up in your arms. You can also massage their different body parts, for increased proprioceptive input.



Variations for toddlers and preschoolers:

- Family yoga time:
- Animal walks: Refer to the videos attached for the same.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoqTEil48PY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQ6SYO4vtNc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmbvqxKewz8>

4. **Bathing time:** Use bathing time to create a ritual where smell, texture, touch, pressure and temperature all come together in harmony for you and your child. Use a soap, and rub or lather it to a point that you like, use different textures to rub down different parts: e.g., a loofah, or a sponge, or a thick towel. Rub gently or as firmly as your child might want on a particular day. You can also use liquid soap one day, to create bubbles in the water, and have a fun playtime together.



Variations for toddlers and preschoolers:

- For older children, you can include some of their favorite toys (animals, squeaky toys, etc.) during bathing time, doing some pretend play with them (e.g. giving them a bath, drying them with a towel etc.)
- Give your kids a duppatta/scarf, dip it in a bucket of water while bathing, and let them squeeze it tightly.
- DIY Bubble Snake: To make this time even more fun and exciting for your toddler/preschooler, you can create your very own bubbles at home (refer to the link attached) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNqPZNFEjuM&t=8s>



5. **Daily chores:** Get your children involved in daily chores around the house. Mopping, wiping walls, dusting and other household chores can also satiate a lot of your sensory needs. While mopping or doing these chores, you can make it a fun experience for your children by using exaggerated rhythmic movements for example - do the sweeps in an arc and to a rhythm.



To consult our team of professionals please contact us at

Mobile: 9650044774

Email: pooja.jain@childrenfirstindia.com

Website: www.childrenfirstindia.com