



BRINGING OUT THE BEST

HEAVY WORK

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ACTIVITIES

All children have a need for physical activity, but some children need to move more than others. You may notice that these children often engage in unsafe activities like climbing furniture, crashing into things, jumping off objects, running inside, and pushing their peers. This may be because their body is looking for extra proprioceptive input. The proprioceptive system is responsible for body awareness. It also plays a big role in self-regulation, attention, and focus.

Heavy work is commonly used to allow a child to get an adequate amount of proprioceptive input in a safe and appropriate way. The goal of heavy work activities is to help regulate a child's arousal level, concentration, ability to sit still, and attend to a task. Heavy work activities should be offered throughout the day. These activities include pushing, pulling, lifting, squeezing, and pinching. It's best to offer heavy work before a seated activity. Here are some ideas to try:

Indoor Activities

Digging in the sand table or bin

Jumping – jumping jacks, mini trampoline, trampoline park

Stacking cups or containers

Making a tunnel with chair and having child crawl under and over them

Carrying heavy items (like groceries from the car or a laundry bag full of clothes)

Pushing or pulling boxes of toys or books

Cleaning – sweeping, vacuuming, mopping, wiping the table, scrubbing the floor

Stacking and unstacking chairs

Carrying around a suitcase or backpack with heavy items inside

Erasing a whiteboard or chalkboard

Pushing against a wall (tell them you need help making the room bigger)

Taking out the trash

Pounding on a drum

Playing with play-doh, clay, putty

Commando crawling (pull yourself along the floor with your arms only)

Opening and holding doors

Doing push-ups

Push a toy stroller or shopping cart with heavy items inside

Climbing stairs

Pulling laundry out of the washer or dryer

Mixing cookie/cake batter or bread dough, rolling out dough

Outdoor Activities

Raking leaves or shoveling snow

Gathering firewood

Digging in the sandbox or dirt, helping in the garden

Pulling another child in a wagon or pushing another child in a toy car

Carrying buckets or water, dirt, or sand

Bouncing a ball

Drawing with sidewalk chalk

Climbing playground equipment

Running, racing

Pushing a wheelbarrow

Pushing another child on a swing

Building a fort

Playing catch with a ball or bean bags

Crab crawling (walk with your hand and feet, stomach facing the ceiling)

Dancing and marching

Climbing a ladder

Riding a tricycle/bicycle or scooter

Swimming

Rolling down a hill

Squeezing a spray nozzle on a hose or a spray bottle

“Painting” the sidewalk or house with water (you just need a bucket or water and a big paint brush)