

## Children's Occupational Therapy Services

### Sensory Motor Circuits - A Sensory Motor Skills Programme for Children

#### Information for Teachers



## Information for Teachers

Participation in a short sensory motor circuit is a great way both to energise and settle children into the school day.

The aim is to focus concentration in readiness for the day's learning. The circuit also encourages the development of the child's sensory processing skills.

Many children can benefit from attending a Sensory Circuit, even for a short period of time. Record behaviours that you see in a child that suggests that they would benefit.

### These include:

- Constant fidgeting in class
- Slow to start work and constantly missing cues
- Difficulty organising self
- Lethargic and dreamy
- Poor coordination and balance
- Known sensory processing difficulties
- Constantly rocking
- Has difficulty paying attention
- Lacking confidence to join in

Once you have selected the children you want to attend the circuit, the circuit co-ordinator and the class teacher need to set a target for each child.

This can be both a physical skills target and a sensory or behaviour target. For example; to improve balance and reduce calling out in class.

The circuit should be an active, physical and fun activity that children enjoy. Ideally it should be run first thing in the morning, and after lunch if at all possible.

The Sensory Circuit provides a sequence of activities done repeatedly to provide the child with the right type of sensory input in order to calm and organise them for the day ahead ready for learning to occur.

The idea is to start with something alerting, move to an organisation stage and then finally to a calming phase. The order is important; you don't want a child to return to class wound up and hyperactive!

## Alerting section

The aim of this section is to provide vestibular and proprioceptive stimulation within a controlled setting.

This prepares the brain for learning.

Activities can include such activities as:

- bouncing 10 times on a mini trampoline or space hopper
- spinning a hoop
- bunny hops / crab walks / frog
- Jumps
- therapy ball for rolling over and bouncing on,
- skipping
- walking on cans/stilts



## 2. Organising section

This section includes activities that require motor sensory processing, balance and timing. The child needs to organise their body, plan their approach and do more than one thing at a time in a sequential order.

Activities includes tasks such as:

- balancing on a beam
- log rolling
- climbing wall bars
- throwing bean bags into a target
- arm push ups against the wall
- blowing bubbles or blowing a paper ball to a target
- wobble boards for balance work
- T-stool for balance work (one legged stool).
- Skipping and jumping a moving rope



These are skills that may increase a child's focus, attention span and performance within the classroom.

## Calming section

The calming activities are very important as they provide input to ensure that children leaves the circuit and return to their classrooms calm, centred and ready for the day ahead.

Activities include proprioceptive or deep pressure activities such as:

- placing feet or hands in weighted bean bags
- lying under weighted blankets
- having balls rolled over their backs
- hot-dogs (rolling child up tightly in a blanket).



**Within the classroom setting** it is often possible to transfer techniques used within the sensory circuits to continue to support a child. Frequent movement breaks can be built into the school day as necessary – ask your Occupational Therapist (OT) for more suggestions advice.

The Sensory Motor Circuits are based on the theories of sensory processing and sensory integration; please ask you OT for further information.

## For further information about this service contact:

OT Admin  
The Peacock Centre  
Brookfields Campus  
Mill Road  
Cambridge  
Cb1 3DF

Tel: 01223 218065

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