

Heavy Work Activities: Oral Motor

What does 'Heavy Work' Activities mean?

Heavy work activities (i.e., proprioceptive input) are used for children with sensory processing difficulties to help **increase attention, decrease defensiveness, and modulate arousal**.

Proprioceptive input is the performance of tasks that involves heavy resistance and input to the muscles and joints, and is essential in helping our bodies take in and process both movement (vestibular) and touch (tactile) information.

Why do 'Heavy work' Activities?

The resistive input obtained through **'heavy work'** activities is generally organized and can improve attention, arousal level, body awareness and muscle tone, as well as decreasing defensiveness. Heavy work activities can help regulate a child's arousal level, concentration, ability to fall asleep or sit still and attend to a task. These children seek out excessive proprioceptive input, they are looking for a way to calm and organize their nervous system. They may seem disruptive, full of excessive energy, or even unsafe. These are the crashers, jumpers, movers, and shakers! We want to target these children with heavy work activities.

Oral Activity Ideas for 'Heavy Work'

★ Chewing foods such as:

- Dried fruit
- Bagels
- Beef jerky
- Cheese
- Granola bars
- Popcorn
- Soft taffy
- Raisins
- Licorice



★ Resistive sucking using items such as:

- Curly straws
- Bottles with a long straws
- Lollipops
- Peanut butter
- Milkshake or smoothies through a straw



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★ Blowing activities such as:

- Whistles
- Wind instruments
- Bubbles
- Horns
- Balloons
- Make splatter paint (make splatter paintings with thin paint on paper... blow air through a straw and watch the paint move! can also use chocolate pudding thinned with milk on freezer paper)



It is also important to note which activities calm your child, arouse them, or over arouse them. This is unique to each individual and must be observed and treated as such!
You want to choose activities THEY are interested in and that IMPROVE their state of arousal to its most functional point.