

**Tîm Camau Bach**  
**PLAY IDEAS FOR THE HOME**  
**THE PROPRIOCEPTIVE SENSE**  
**(Body Position)**



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Proprioception is our body's ability to know where it is at any given time (otherwise called [body awareness](#)). And just like we see through receptors called our eyes, with proprioception, we know where our body is because of receptors that run all through our muscles and joints. Our vision is stimulated by bright lights or moving objects, and proprioception is stimulated by pressure to the receptors all throughout our body. Anytime we squeeze through a tight space, hug someone, or jump up and down we are getting proprioceptive input.

Proprioceptive activities can be used to help calm, focus, or even alert a child. But this isn't a one size fits all situation. There are different types of proprioceptive activities that can all have different affects.

### Activities

- Messy play – Rice
- Skittles
- Hammer & ball/Whack Attack
- Paper Bag Kick/ hanging objects to bat
- Stretchy bands
- Sausage Roll/Parachute
- Scooter board

### Messy Play

Messy Play is designed with children's natural curiosity in mind. It encourages a positive approach to new experiences. There is no "right" way for your child to do messy play. This will build his self-confidence and self-esteem.

Through messy play, your child can develop concentration, problem-solving and planning. Working with messy play develops self-respect and respect for others, having space to be beside the messy play tub, allowing another person to have space, taking turns with a scoop or other toy, also present opportunities for making relationships.



Messy play is beneficial for many reasons, and one of those is the promotion of turn taking. Filling and emptying pots, taking turns to tip out a full pot or to look for objects hidden in the tub all help practice turn taking. Place objects in with the main plaything, e.g. toy cars or animals in with the rice. Let him fill trucks with rice/ pasta/ lentils etc. If you copy what your child does, it will show him that you think it's a good idea. Praise him for playing well and show him that it makes you happy to see him playing nicely.

### HOW TO DYE RICE - RECIPE

1 packet of value rice  
Tuff Tray from Amazon



## HOW TO COLOUR RICE

1 small bottle of cleansing hand gel  
 Food colouring  
 Mix together in a bowl and leave to dry.



MORE IDEAS FOR MESSY PLAY IN THIS LOVELY BOOK

## SKITTLES WITH HEAVY BALL

You can create your own Skittles by filling with different textures (sand; pasta; coloured rice; pom poms etc). Scatter the bottles around the room first because scanning the room to locate objects improves attention and visual skills such as focusing and spatial awareness. Moving around the room to pick up one item after another improves sequencing, motor planning and organizational skills.

Once your bottles are organised roll the heavy ball to try knock bottles down.

Pushing OR carry heavy loads and feeling the deep pressure of heavy weights provides calming proprioception, while increasing body awareness, gross motor strength and force



## HAMMER & BALL from Amazon £24.00

Pounding with vigour improves proprioception and force, releases energy and increases gross motor skills. Watching what you're doing strengthens basic eye-motor skills as well as more complex visual spatial processing skills.



Whack a Mole - Amazon £17.99



## PAPER BAG KICK BALL

Make a paper bag into a ball



## BENEFITS OF ACTIVITY

- Flexing and extending leg and foot promotes proprioception
- Connecting with the bag provides deep pressure to muscles and joints
- Running and kicking improve balance, gross motor skills, crossing midline, grading of movement and motor planning
- Aiming and kicking improve eye-foot coordination and visual spatial discrimination
- Finding a safe and appropriate way to channel energy strengthen emotion development. Pillow fights are always a good one to try. Great for giving sensory feedback that your child might crave.



## STRETCHY BANDS

Using stretchy bands gives joints and muscles a workout. It strengthens proprioception, force, bilateral coordination and gross motor control. Devising new moves builds the child's movement vocabulary. Watching others' gestures and imitating their moves improves attention, focusing and motor planning. This activity is arousing, organizing and incredibly calming.



## SAUSAGE ROLL:

**EQUIPMENT:** Sturdy blanket

**ACTIVITY:** Lay the blanket down on a carpeted area. Have one child lie on one end of the blanket. Get the other children to help roll the child from one end of the blanket to the other so they end up rolled nice and snug inside the blanket. Sing a song while rolling, such as this one to the tune of "Row, Row, and Row Your Boat":



Roll, roll, and roll you up  
Roll and roll you up  
Roll and roll and roll and roll  
Into a delicious sausage roll.

Then, if you think the child will be amused (as opposed to scared), have others pretend to eat them up. Next, ask the child, "Ready to be unrolled?" When ready, gently lift one end of the blanket so the child slowly rolls out onto the carpet.

## VARIATIONS

For a child with vestibular issues who may not be sufficiently aware of her head position to adjust it, accordingly, take care that her head doesn't get banged when unrolling.



Some children would prefer to have their whole bodies wrapped, including their heads, to enjoy the feeling of dark enclosures. If a child is at first hesitant with this game, try rolling him in a blanket while standing so he can see if he wants the feeling of snugness.

## BENEFIT OF ACTIVITY

Vestibular, proprioceptive and tactile stimulation; Body awareness; Joint attention; playing pretend.

Children with sensory needs often really enjoy being snug and cosy in enclosed places. You are recreating the sense of containment and familiar comfort that babies have in the womb. This experience can reinforce that feeling, so that when the child is upset, they can learn to seek out and cosy spot to self-calm.



## Another use for a blanket is to use it as Parachute.

Hold a small blanket between yourself and your child put a ball/ bean bag or soft toy on top and say ready steady go on go quickly lift the blanket and make the toy fly into the air.

**HAVE FUN WITH SCOOTER BOARD** by sitting or on tummy – try picking objects from floor; crash into cardboard shoe boxes; push with feet; make a path for child to follow.



# WHAT IS PROPRIOCEPTION?

**Necessary for body awareness.**

**Also causes chemical reaction in brain – feel-good factor.**

Proprioception is mainly unconscious. We don't have to think about how to nod, or wave, or pick up a cup of tea.

Proprioception is the deep pressure and stretch and pull on our muscles, joints and tendons, by strongly engaging one's muscles and joints by doing 'heavy work'. It stimulates the cerebellum at the back part of the brain stem, and this communicates with the reticular activating system to inhibit arousal and put it at a normal level so that one can concentrate on the task in hand.

Proprioception refers to sensory messages about the position, force, direction, and movement of our own body parts. It helps integrate tactile and vestibular sensations.

The functions of proprioception are to increase body awareness and to contribute to motor control and motor planning (praxis). Proprioception helps us with body expression, the ability to move our body parts efficiently. It lets us walk smoothly, run quickly, climb stairs, carry a suitcase, sit, stand, stretch, and lie down. It gives us emotional security, for when we can trust our bodies, we feel safe and secure.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF PROPRIOCEPTIVE DYSFUNCTION

The child with inefficient processing of sensations coming from his muscles and joints may:

- Have problems with touch, or with balance and movement as well
- Have a poor sense of body awareness
- Be still, uncoordinated, and clumsy, falling and tripping frequently
- Lean, jump, or crash against objects and people, and invade others body space
- Be unable to do familiar things without looking, such as getting dressed
- Manipulate hair clips, lamp switches etc. so hard they break
- Pull and twist clothing; stretch T-shirt
- Chew cuffs, collars, pencils and other inedible objects
- Having difficulty ascending and descending stairs
- Slap feet when walking, sit on feet, stretch limbs, poke cheeks, pull on fingers for additional feedback
- Avoid participation in ordinary movement experiences because they make the child feel uncomfortable

Proprioception is the great organizer of all sensations. A powerful form of input that can counter over-responsivity in other systems, it helps to increase alertness and decrease anxiety. It bring us up when we're down, and down when we're way up.

**It is important to implement proprioceptive activities throughout the day and this will help the brain not to over-respond to harmless sensory inputs and put your child on full alert!**

Other Proprioceptive input can be added by snug fit clothes or weight. Therefore, maybe look into the possibility of the child wearing a stretchy strong Lycra under garment during the day.



## Activities with proprioception

- Play on pull up bars (can be installed in doorways)
- Jumping on a trampoline, or small trampette
- Ride a scooter or bicycle
- Jump or climb in and out of inner tubes
- Participate in climbing activities
- Play running and jumping games
- Play in a sandbox with damp heavy sand
- Colour a rainbow with large paper on the floor, patio or pavement with chalk whilst on hands and knees
- Use cardboard boxes with blankets and pillows to make dens
- Put heavy objects in a cardboard box and have the child push it through cones 'driving a car'. or playing shopping with a trolley
- Make a house with small doors out of cardboard box and have the child squeeze in and out
- Bounce on a space hopper
- Play catch with a heavy ball or bounce and roll a heavy ball
- Play jumping games such as hopscotch and jump rope
- Things to climb on (climbing provides proprioception input through the arms, legs and trunk
  - Balls
  - Crash cushion
  - Mats
  - Large inflated mats/cushions
  - Large boxes
  - Climbing frame
- Play going camping by pulling heavy blankets across a few chairs, have your child pull the heavy blankets
- Fill a pillowcase with a few stuffed animals etc. in it for weight, your child can then push or pull the pillowcase up the stairs, and incline or from room to room
- Push against a wall
- Jump onto a crash pad – gym mat
- Fill a large toy truck with heavy blocks, pushing with both hands to knock things down
- Play cars under the kitchen table where your child pushes the car with one hand and weight bears on the other hand
- Stack chairs

## Proprioception rich activities to use during the daily routine

- Help unpack heavy groceries
- Carry heavy items (baskets, boxes etc. with heavy items inside)
- Take the cushions off sofas, jump onto them or crash into them
- Play shopping games, with heavy items e.g. fill squash bottles with water, packets of rice, bags of potatoes
- Ask your child to put away large toys and equipment
- Sweep the floor
- Dust surfaces
- Mop
- Take out the rubbish bins

- Carry the laundry basket
- Wipe the table after meals
- Carry buckets of water to water the garden plants
- Help change the bed sheets/blankets
- Cooking activities; stir, mix chop, roll out pastry
- Wash the car
- Rake the leaves
- Push wheelbarrow

#### Activities rich in pressure touch sensation

- Rip/crumble/scrunch old telephone books and newspapers – throw into boxes
- sandwich your child between pillows, sofa cushions and blankets
- provide firm towel rubbing after a bath or swimming
- wrap your child up in a big towel after bathing and sit on your lap with hugs
- give bear hugs
- play turtle games – crawling around with a bean bag resting on your child's back
- roll up in a blanket
- roll a large ball over your child
- wear rugby skins type undergarment

Quote from useful website: [www.andnextcomesl.com](http://www.andnextcomesl.com) 50 heavy work activities. *"Tasks that involve heavy resistance for the muscles and joints. It involves proprioceptive input, the awareness of posture, movement, and resistance relating to the body."* - Source: *Heavy Work Fact Sheet*

Basically, heavy work activities are used to calm kids, provide input to a child's muscles and joints, and help increase a child's focus and attention e.g.

1. Climb up a slide
2. Crawl backwards using hands
3. Carry bean bags
4. Climb a chair or couch
5. Carry stacks of books
6. Squeezing
7. Carry a pile of books in a backpack.
8. Push an adult on a swing
9. Play on a teeter totter or seesaw
10. Build a wall with soft brick
11. Make an obstacle course tunnels
12. Play catch with bean bags or ball
13. Carry a bucket of water or sand
14. Play tug of war - You can use a rope, blanket, scarf etc
15. Wheelbarrow walking
16. Push a wheelbarrow
17. Pull a wagon
18. Dig in the garden or sand
19. Ride a scooter board or put something heavy on them
20. Load or unload dishwasher

21. Drink a thick milkshake or smoothie through a straw
22. Clean windows or mirrors
23. Have a pillow fight
24. Move logs
25. Use a watering can for houseplants or garden
26. Wipe walls
27. Help with the laundry
28. Do an obstacle course
29. Use a weighted lap pad
30. Wall push ups

Note: generally, rhythmic movement is calming while erratic movement is arousing. Never force movement. Look out for physiological responses such as increased distractibility, disorientation, nausea, breathing changes, and unexpected tiredness, suddenly pale or flushed skin.

**REMEMBER WHEN THE PROPRIOCEPTIVE AND VESTIBULAR SYSTEMS ARE ACTIVATED GREATER LEARNING HAS BEEN SHOWN TO TAKE PLACE.**

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