Sensory Diet Activities for Children

Touch/Deep Pressure

Swaddle
Bear hugs
Backscratch
Massage with/without lotion
Joint compressions
Therapy brushing
Warm bath
Scrub with washcloth/scrubby
Water play
Wear certain fabrics
Explore various textures
Sit in the sunshine/shade
Jump on "crash pad"
Log rolling
Use hand fidgets
Play with stuffed toys
Make mudpies
Use fingerpaint or other paints
Use glitter glue

Arts & crafts
Use foamy soap/shaving cream
Play with whipped cream
Pet a dog, cat, or other animal
Mix cookie dough, cake batter
Weighted blanket, vest, lap pad
Roll up in a "burrito" blanket
"Sandwich" between pillows
Climb under sofa cushions
Play in sandbox
Use Play-doh, Gak, Floam,
   Sculpey, Silly Putty, clay
Sensory bin with dry rice &
   beans or other materials
Help with gardening
Vibrating toys - pens, balls,
   stuffed toys
Use vibrating toothbrush
Vibramat/Tender Vibes mattress

Others:

Note: Never *force* a child to touch something he finds "gross." Let him use a paintbrush, stick, gloves, or even a toy for cautious exploration. The mouth is also lined with skin - see "oral comforts."

Movement/Proprioception

Rocking (in your arms, hobby
horse, or rocking chair)
Playing horsie on your knee
Crawling on hands and knees
Commando crawling with full body
Walk
Run
Jump
March
Dance
Bunny hop
Wheelbarrow walk
Animal walks
Jumping jacks
Floor push ups
Wall push ups
Sit ups
Use swings
Playground slides
Use monkey bars
Climb stairs

Climb ladders
Jump on mini-trampoline
Use Sit n' Spin, Dizzy Disc Jr.,
   or other spinning toy
Hop-It balls
Inflatable seat cushions
Bounce on a therapy ball
Ride a tricycle/bicycle
Ride a scooter/skateboard
Amusement park rides
Swimming
Push a grocery cart or stroller
Brain Gym and yoga exercises
Roll down a hill
Hokey Pokey
Play catch
Balloon tennis
Play hopscotch
Cartwheels and somersaults
Ice skating/sledding/skiing
Pogo Stick/Bungee Jumper

Others:

Notes: 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, unexpected tiredness, suddenly pale or flushed skin.

More Sensory Diet Activities for Children

Listening/Auditory

Listen to favorite music
Discover calming vs. arousing music
Bang on pots and pans
Play musical instruments
Listen to sounds of nature outdoors
Singing
Humming
Whispering
Blow whistles
Therapeutic Listening programs
Sound Eaze/School Eaze CDs
White noise machine or CD

Observe silence
Identify and label sounds
Use earplugs or sound-canceling headphones
Explore the stereo volume control knob
"Safe space" with quiet and low light

Others:

Looking/Vision

Look at mobiles, lava lamps, bubble lamps
Colored lightbulbs
Avoid fluorescent bulbs (visual flicker, noise, and
    mercury content in compact fluorescents)
"Safe space" with minimal visuals
Respect color preference in clothing, objects, and
    interior decorating
Reconsider complicated prints and patterns on
    clothing, walls, and floors
Toys in opaque containers
Leave out 5-10 toys at a time to avoid visual overload
Look at photos
Look at picture books
Look at nature - fish tanks, farm, zoo, ocean

Watch cartoons and movies
High-quality sunglasses outdoors
Tinted lenses indoors if sensitive to glare
Wide brim hat or visor outdoors
Games and activities that develop visual skills-
    mazes, dot-to-dots, I Spy, drawing, flashlight tag, etc.

Others:

Smell/Taste/Oral Comforts

Essential oils and scented candles
    Explore personal preference and discover
    invigorating (typically lemon and peppermint) vs.
    calming (typically vanilla, rose, and sweet orange)
Smell flowers
Sniff spices and herbs
Blindfold smelling game
Explore tastes: sweet, salty, sour, spicy, bitter
Eat frozen/cool/warm foods
Explore textures: crunchy, creamy, chewy, lumpy
Chew gum/suck on lollipop
Blow bubbles
Suck thick liquid through straw
Use age appropriate "chewy"

Others:

Note: Avoid lavender and tea tree oil as studies show they
may cause hormonal imbalances in young boys.