

## Sensory Indoor Fun

It's not easy to keep children occupied especially when the weather doesn't cooperate. So, what do you do when your kids are stuck inside? There are many fun sensory-based activities that you can do indoors with your children.

**Sensory Integration (SI)** is a brain process that occurs in all of us. It allows us to take information through our senses, organize it and make a plan to produce a meaningful response to interact with our environment with ease and comfort. **Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)** is the inability to process information received through our senses and use it to behave in a meaningful way. Below are some fun activities to target all 5 main sensory areas.

**Tactile System** this is housed in our skin. It is responsible for processing touch information from the body including light touch, firm touch, pain and discrimination (knowing what you are feeling without looking, such as penny vs. dime). Some fun indoor activities that target the Tactile System include:

- **Finger painting, cloud dough, slime and playdough**
- **Baking is a fun in home sensory activity**
- **Hide objects in a bean bin, rice bin, or even plastic bags (tactile discrimination)**
- **Tactile obstacle courses with a texture road (carpet squares, blankets, felt and sandpaper) and walking/crawling on uneven surfaces (pillows and couch cushions)**

**Proprioceptive System** is housed in our muscles, tendons and joints. It is responsible for knowing where our body is in relation to self and to the environment. This system contributes to coordination and tells us how much force we need to do something. Some fun indoor activities that target the Proprioceptive System include:

- **Giving bear hugs or playing "squishing games" (squishing child's body between pillows or cushions)**
- **Climbing through obstacle course of pillows, cushions, and bean bags**
- **Bear crawling, crab walking, wheelbarrow walking, other animal walks**
- **Pushing laundry baskets around the floor with a friend, sibling or groceries inside**
- **Making a child into a hot dog or burrito while rolling them tightly into a blanket**
- **Rolling therapy or exercise ball over the child's body**

**Vestibular System** is housed in the inner ear. It tells us where our bodies are in space, how we move, and contribute to balance. Some fun indoor activities that target the Vestibular System include:

- **Animal walks**
- **Practice going backwards and upside down with the support of the caregiver (have child sit on the therapy ball and go upside down reaching for stuffed animals or bean bags to throw them into a bucket or Tupperware container).**
- **Swinging in a blanket**
- **Bouncing on a therapy or exercise ball**
- **Walking on uneven surfaces while doing a fun in home obstacle course**

**Visual System** is housed in our eyes and brain. It is responsible to interpreting and organizing the visual information we see. Some fun indoor activities that target the Visual System include:

- Light Bright
- Homemade sensory bottles (water bottle with glitter and things to color them)
- Flashlight games
- Bubbles
- Homemade pinwheels and then blowing them

**Oral System** is housed in the mouth. It is responsible for telling us how things feel in our mouths. Some fun indoor activities that target the Oral System include:

- Blowing bubbles in a bowl of water
- Blowing cotton balls over Kleenex with straws
- Whistles

**Auditory System** is housed in your ears. It is responsible for hearing and discriminating between sounds including voices and background noises and the ability to filter these. Some fun indoor activities that target the Auditory System include:

- Simon says and freeze dance
- Playing calming music
- Exposure to household appliances making a game out of the sounds these items make
- Completing structured tasks while the music and TV is on