



Learning Services

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SENSORY STRATEGY PACKAGE PART 1

To avoid unnecessary delays in student support, it is recommended teachers use this handout to help guide **universal sensory strategy** implementation. You can consult your OT for general information at any time. If a student continues to have difficulty after implementing these strategies for 1-2 month period, consult the OT for additional ideas/support.

*Ordering details: Links provided are only one option for ordering and are listed to provide additional product information/pictures. All prices listed are approximate and do not include taxes and shipping.

First, consider: Does the student understand task instructions? Is he/she able to participate in this activity? Is it too hard or too easy?

TO ADDRESS SENSORY DIFFICULTIES:

Students who seek movement have a difficult time sitting still or remaining in their chair.

- Movin'sit (wiggle) wedge for chairs and disc cushions for carpet time
 - Ordering details:
 - Ensure size fits chair seat prior to ordering; only half inflate cushion for optimum effect
 - \$30-60, <https://www.fdm.ca/en/movin-sit-cushion-i-0101-01> or https://store.schoolspecialty.com/OA_HTML/ibeCCtpltmDspRte.jsp?minisite=10224&item=82870
- Zuma floor rocking chairs (carpet)
 - Looks like a classroom chair without legs so it can sit directly on the floor; allows for rocking back and forth while seated
 - Ordering details:
 - \$93; <https://www.jmcdesigninteriors.com/shop/zuma-floor-rocker?search=zuma>

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- Zuma or Analogy rocking chairs
 - Looks like a typical classroom chair, but rocks in a linear motion. Great as they offer back support so can be used throughout the day.
 - Ordering details:
 - Have student sit in a classroom chair, feet flat on the floor, knees at about 90 degrees. Measure from seat of chair to the floor to obtain size required. Consider sizing up if growth is required.
 - Zuma chairs: \$130; measures true to size
<https://www.jmcdesigninteriors.com/shop/zuma-rocking-chair-8?search=zuma>
 - Analogy chairs: \$100; add 2" to required seat height
<https://www.jmcdesigninteriors.com/shop/seating/analogy-rocking-chair>
- Hokki stools or Kore wobble stools
 - Ensure adequate trunk control – these stools are great when used for shorter durations (eg. 15-20 minutes then change position, switch to a Zuma chair or regular classroom chair with Movin' Sit cushion on it).
 - Ordering details:
 - To obtain required size, follow instructions listed below 'Zuma rocking chair' above
 - Kore wobble stools, \$75: <https://www.fdm.ca/en/flexible-seating/kore-stool-i-2715110>
 - Hokki stools \$105-\$135:
http://www.benchmark.ca/store/p1/Hokki_Stool_.html
- Exercise balls
 - Ensure adequate trunk control and proper size. These balls are great when used for shorter durations (eg. 15-20 minutes then change position, switch to a Zuma chair or regular classroom chair).
 - Ordering details:
 - When seated on the ball, student's feet should rest flat on the floor.
 - \$30-\$60, <https://www.fdm.ca/en/thera-band-exercise-ball-i-0193-45>
- Standing desk – see separate OT handout on standing desks in '**Sensory Strategy Package Part 2**'

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*Consider pairing the above seating options with the following to provide additional opportunities for movement/input when seated:

- Fidgets & Theraputty
 - Explain rules and expectations for use prior to providing. Select fidgets that are not visually distracting. Dollar stores can have some great options. Theraputty comes in different resistance levels; can also use this as part of fine motor groups.
 - Ordering details:
 - \$7/container, https://store.schoolspecialty.com/OA_HTML/ibeCCtpltmDspRte.jsp?minisite=10224&item=72572
- Theraband/exercise band tied around classroom chair legs or desk legs
 - Provides resistance for legs to press into/work against when seated in their chair. Can combine this with the Zuma rocker or typical chair.
 - Ordering details:
 - Consider resistance required (medium-heavy for older students)
 - \$20 roll, <https://www.fdmtd.ca/en/thera-band-with-latex-5-5-m-i-0186-2>
 - Another option (more expensive), bouncy bands, \$20/band: <https://www.fdmtd.ca/en/flexible-seating/the-bouncy-bands-for-chairs-i-3156100>
- Weighted lap pad 2-3lbs (not to exceed 5% of child's body weight)
 - Provides deep pressure input which has a regulating effect on the nervous system; can promote student's ability to focus
 - Ordering details:
 - \$60-80; consider size required (small K-gr 1, medium grade 2 & up) https://store.schoolspecialty.com/OA_HTML/ibeCCtpltmDspRte.jsp?minisite=10224&item=5740211 (small)
 - https://store.schoolspecialty.com/OA_HTML/ibeCCtpltmDspRte.jsp?minisite=10224&item=5740214 (medium)

Students who often have difficulty sitting up; may lay on the floor during carpet lessons, consider:

- Back Jack or Ray Lax chairs for carpet
 - These students may lack adequate trunk support to remain in an unsupported seated position. These chairs sit on the floor and provide back support to assist with this.
- Ordering details:
 - \$40, <https://www.fdmtd.ca/en/flexible-seating/ray-lax-chair-i-3181100>

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Students who seek additional input/lack body awareness; these students may be ones who prefer to sit in adult's lap at carpet or sit too close to peers.

- Howdahug or stadium chairs for carpet
 - This chair provides a designated spot while provided deep pressure input to the nervous system. The child can also rock in this chair. Teach him/her to do this moderately so they don't fall back.
 - Ordering details:
 - \$100; <https://www.fdmr.ca/en/howdahug-child-i-252200>
- Weighted lap pad 2-3lbs (not to exceed 5% of child's body weight)
 - Provides deep pressure input which has a regulating effect on the nervous system; can promote student's ability to focus and attend (ordering details provided above)

Students who have difficulty paying attention:

- Heavy work and deep pressure input are regulating to the nervous system. They help bring you up when you are 'revving' too low and help bring you down when you are 'revving' too high. They can be used with any student who may have a difficult time paying attention either because they are too 'sluggish' or too 'fidgety'.
- These activities can be embedded into classroom routines. They can be done with a small or large group in the classroom, or outside of the classroom, especially for students who benefit from an environmental break.
- Always follow movement breaks (immediately) with isometric/exit activities to help settle the nervous system before transitioning onto classroom work.
- Frequency of these strategies varies according to student needs. Typically, students who are having significant difficulty benefit from 2-3 heavy work/deep pressure activities per day, in addition to recess. **As always, ensure alternate reasons for student difficulty are ruled out first (eg. level of classroom work matches student ability).**
- Activity options – see '**Sensory Strategy Package Part 2**' for these handouts:
 - Deep pressure activities
 - Heavy work for the mouth
 - Heavy work jobs and errands
 - Isometric exercises
 - Boot camp circuit
 - Exit (Calming) Activities **provided by Lynda Swain & Anna Lenarczyk SD43*

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OT-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

Requires consultation with your school OT and parent consent prior to use with student

Indoor swings

- Safety considerations and protocols for use; positioning considerations; programming developed for student and training provided to staff

Brushing and Joint Compressions

- Safety considerations and protocols for use; OT needs to assess suitability and child's response to strategy; EA/staff require training on protocol from OT

Weighted Items (*exception lap pads and weighted backpacks under 3lbs)

- Vests, blankets
- Safety considerations and protocols for use; OT needs to assess suitability and child's response to strategy

Compression Vests/Garments

- Please contact your school OT to determine if a trial is appropriate, or if alternate strategies should be explored first.

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