



Learning Services

23000 – 116 Avenue
Maple Ridge, B.C. V2X 0T8
Telephone: (604) 467-1101
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SENSORY & SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES: Important Covid-19 Considerations

GENERAL INFORMATION & CONSIDERATIONS

**For any student programming that requires physical contact to help meet sensory/self-regulation needs, parent consent and consultation with your OT is required.

When possible, District guidelines and safety protocols should be followed:

- Maintain safe distancing
- Good hand hygiene (washing/hand sanitizer)
- Occupied rooms require adequate ventilation
- Minimize touched surfaces

An Important Note about Deep Pressure Activities:

- In light of COVID-19, activities listed on the 'Universal Strategies for Deep Pressure' document created by the SD42 OT department **are not recommended at this time.**

Sensory & Self-regulation - Ideas to Minimize Physical Contact:

- Heavy work jobs: consider frequent walk breaks; add 2-3lbs with assigned 'heavy' item (eg. weighted backpack) as needed. Try without weight component first, gradually add on if needed.
- Utilize Calming Exit Activities, Deep Breathing Activities, Isometrics where possible
- For students who respond well or seek out visual input, consider increasing opportunities for visual input as a way to promote their regulation. See OT handout "Visual Ideas for Self-Regulation".
- Instead of chewlery (which can be dropped/thrown at times), consider alternate Oral-Motor Heavy Work (see OT handout).
- Target activities where the student provides input themselves, for example: squeezes medium sized ball to self for deep pressure, jumps on mini-trampoline, uses roller massage on self, etc. Any item will need to be cleaned before and after use. You may have to handle items to support student use but having the student do what they can independently will limit the proximity required.



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SENSORY TOOLS: SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Brushing & Joint Compressions

- Consult your OT for direction and support. One modification may be to only offer shoulder compressions, at the direction of your OT. Have the student seated in their chair, EA stands behind student and applies gentle joint compressions. EA positioned behind student to decrease proximity to student's face etc. Consultation with your OT and parent consent is required prior to modifying these programs.

Fabric Items

- Avoid use of fabric swings. Consult your OT as needed for support with this. After discussion with your school OT, if it is determined that a student needs to use a fabric swing as part of his/her program, a swing will be assigned to that student only. There is no sharing of fabric swings. Wash the swing regularly.
- Weighted Backpacks, Lap Pads, Vests, Blankets, and Yogibos: Assign to one student and wash regularly. Reminder that weighted blankets and vests require OT consultation and parent consent for use.
- In accordance with District guidelines, fabric items should be removed from classrooms and sensory rooms.

SENSORY EQUIPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- **Assign equipment to one student** (not shared between students)
- **Disinfect before and after each use**, as per SD42 guidelines.

This includes:

- Alternate seating (e.g. wobble stool, rocker chair, wiggle cushions)
- Large Bean Bag Chairs, Crash Mats in Classrooms or Sensory Rooms
- Avoid use of theraputty and playdough, as per B.C. Ministry Document "Covid-19: Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings" dated April 3, 2020.

OT, PT SD42 RESOURCES: <https://learningservices.sd42.ca/departments/occupational-and-physiotherapy-services/occupational-therapy-resources/>