



## February 2025

**From the Director's Chair** – by Rita Dai Wang

**Registration Referral Bonus:** Thank you to everyone who has already registered for the 2025-2026 school year. We love having families come back! The highest compliment our parents can pay us is the referral of family or friends. The trust that you place in us means a great deal. In appreciation, you will receive a \$50 credit off one month's tuition for every new enrollment as a result of your referral.

**Parent/Teacher Conferences:** Thank you to all the 2's/3's parents who made the time to conference with teachers. While we see many of you at drop-off and pick-up, it is nice to have a dedicated time to discuss your children's learning. If you ever have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out.

**Dinner and Dialogue:** We are excited to continue a new parent event this year. We are hoping this will be a casual but meaningful way for parents and teachers to engage in conversation about kids, families, and anything you'd like over dinner. See link for details. The event will be Thursday 2/6 from 6:00-7:30. Please RSVP by Monday 2/3. <https://forms.gle/p1qoqrjYB5cD1fiP8>

**Science Camp:** Believe it or not, we are starting to plan for summer camp! St. Peter's offers a fun-packed science camp the first two weeks in June (6/2-6/6 and 6/9-6/13) from 9:30-1:30 (\$200 for 1 week 1, \$395 for both weeks). It is open to those exiting the 3 year old and 4 year old classes. Keep an eye out for more details coming home soon!

**Proprioception and Heavy Work:** Have you heard of proprioception and the benefits of heavy work? If you like to exercise or clean the house when you're stressed, then you're already doing it! Read the article below to see how heavy work can help you and your children regulate your bodies, emotions, and gain more focus/concentration.



### Valentine's Day Foam

1. In a bowl, add 2 tbsp dish soap and ¼ cup water. Add food coloring or liquid water color.
2. Mix with a hand mixer for 1-2 minutes or until the foam forms stiff peaks.
3. Make more as needed!

<http://www.thepaigediaries.com/2018/01/Valentines-day-foam-sensory-tub/>

### Try this at home!

Winter is also a great time to practice fine-motor skills indoors! Give your child beads to thread, clothespins to clip, playdough to pound and shape, toothpicks to build into structures, or spaghetti to thread into straws!

### Dates to Remember

- 2/6 Dinner and Dialogue
- 2/6 Jump Bunch – 4's
- 2/13 Valentine's Day Party – 2's
- 2/14 Valentine's Day Party – 3's/4's
- 2/17 President's Day – no school



### Happy Birthday!



- 2/4 Lilly
- 2/4 Scarlett
- 2/13 Mabel
- 2/19 Ruby
- 2/26 Ms. Wendy

### 4 Reasons Children Should Play Outside in the Cold

There's a Norwegian saying – *"Det finnes ikke darlig vaer, bare darlig, klaer!"* which translates to *"There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing."* Playing outside in the cold weather has many benefits for kids, so bundle them up and send them out!

Playing outside in the winter:

- Strengthens the immune system
- Helps to burn extra energy
- Promotes problem-solving and cognitive thinking
- Boosts vitamin D levels and uplifts mood

<http://www.pentagonplay.co.uk/news-and-info/4-reasons-children-play-outside-cold-weather>

# Heavy work and sensory processing issues: What you need to know

By Amanda Morin



## Key takeaways

- Heavy work doesn't actually have to be work.
- There are many heavy work activities kids can do at home, such as marching in place or cooking.
- An occupational therapist can help you figure out which heavy work activities could be most beneficial for your child.

Your child may get a number of therapies to help with sensory processing issues. But specialists may recommend one kind of therapy you may not have heard of. It's called **heavy work activities**. Occupational therapists commonly use heavy work to help kids who seek or avoid certain kinds of sensory input.

Here's what you need to know about heavy work activities and how they can help.

## Proprioception and heavy work

We typically think of people as having five senses: sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. But there are **two other senses that can affect motor skills**. One is called the vestibular sense, and it controls balance and movement. The other is called the proprioceptive sense, and it controls body awareness.

A person's sense of body awareness and balance comes from the way receptors in muscles and joints send messages to the brain. They tell us where our body is in space, where each body part is, and what it's doing. It's the way we know how much force to use to complete a task, like writing on paper or shutting a door.

This system doesn't always work as effectively in kids with sensory processing issues. Some kids may write too lightly with a pencil or slam the car door really hard. They may think they're pushing down hard enough with the pencil or that they're using less force to shut the door than they actually are.

When kids struggle with things like this, heavy work helps them know where their body is and what it should be doing.

## How heavy work can help kids with sensory processing issues

Most people get enough physical input from daily activities. But some kids with sensory processing issues may not. They need extra help "jump-starting" the systems that control balance, movement, and body awareness. That's where heavy work activities come in.

Heavy work is any type of activity that pushes or pulls against the body. It could be something like swimming or vacuuming. With those activities, the resistance of the water or the vacuum cleaner creates the push or pull.

Or it could be something like jumping on a trampoline or hanging on playground equipment. In those cases, a child's own weight creates that resistance.

Kids with sensory processing issues often **seek (or avoid) sensory input**. Kids who seek input are looking for proprioceptive input. It can help them calm their body and make them feel more oriented in space. Without heavy work activities, they may seek input by crashing into or jumping off things or in other unsafe ways.

Heavy work is designed to provide that input in safer, more consistent ways. When kids do heavy work throughout the day, it can help them feel more organized before they need to seek input.

The most effective heavy work activities activate as many muscles and joints as possible at the same time, and for a short period of time. That means not all heavy work is equal.

Some activities — like swimming — are more effective and powerful than others.

## How to provide heavy work at home

Heavy work doesn't actually have to be work. Many of the activities that can help your child self-regulate are just typical play and everyday chores.

You can try some of these activities at home. Keep in mind that because they're not all equal, your child may have to complete more of them or do them for a longer period of time before you see improvement.

Heavy work can be part of a **sensory diet**. A sensory diet is a series of physical activities and accommodations tailored to give kids the unique sensory input they need. You can do a sensory diet at home. But you'll need to work with an occupational therapist to find the activities that are most beneficial to your child and to create the routine that works best.

**Here are some activities that use movement and resistance to provide sensory input:**

### Household chores

- Taking out the trash
- Pushing a vacuum cleaner
- Mopping or sweeping
- Carrying a full laundry basket
- Carrying groceries
- Cooking (such as stirring or kneading bread dough)
- Moving chairs/furniture or rearranging books on shelves
- Shoveling snow or raking leaves
- Pushing the shopping cart in a store



## Outdoor play

- Riding a tricycle or bicycle
- Playing catch (perhaps with a weighted ball)
- Swinging on monkey bars
- Climbing on the playground
- Jumping rope or on a trampoline
- Playing hopscotch
- Wheelbarrow walking (walking on hands while a partner holds feet up)
- Swimming



## Inside play

- Playing Twister
- Squishing play-dough
- Blowing bubbles
- Wrestling (only if your child won't get **overexcited**)
- Marching or running in place
- Doing push-ups (either on the floor or against the wall)



It's a good idea to take notes and observe how certain activities affect your child. Some may help and others may be overstimulating. Knowing that can help you work to adjust and find the right routine.