



# Top Tips to Help Manage Sensory Overload

## 3 points to remember:

### 1. Environmental Changes

- Small Environmental changes can make a difference.
- Look at the environment to see if it is creating difficulty
- Can you change anything? Is it too loud, too bright, too busy, strong smells?

### 2. Identify sensory based activities, tools and create a Sensory tool Box

- Explore with your child/young person some positive sensory activities which have a calming and regulating effect
- Create a tool box
- Incorporate these sensory activities into play, hobbies and daily activities to support regulation

### 3. Be prepared

- Build routines so that your child/young person knows what to expect
- Use visual supports/schedules/ social stories
- Have sensory activities organised and ready at times you know are difficulty- first thing in the morning, after school, before bed or going to the dentist, Hairdressers
- Be aware of possible sensory challenges in different environments so that you can prepare your child/young person and have tools/resources with you to help.

# Sensory Activities and Tools

## What to consider:

- **Wear sunglasses** or a hat to avoid brightness.
- **Listen to music** – to filter out unwanted noise.
- **Take regular breaks / quiet time** to help regulate self.
- **Chewy food** can help focus and relax – use gum
- **Use a fidget** – blu-tac, paper clips
- **Do heavy muscle activities** – chair push ups, lifting, putting away.
- **Learn what kind of touch they like** -Remember that a hug may be painful rather than comforting.
- **Movement activities** – rocking chair, swing, cycling, swimming, walking the dog.

# Muscle Tools (Proprioception)

- Muscle Resistance Movement-Pushing, pulling, bouncing, lifting
  - Going to the gym/park
  - Resistance band work
  - Yoga
  - Walking, hiking, cycling
  - Swimming
  - Chair or wall push ups
  - Door exercise bar
  - Body Sock
  - Animal walking
  - Crawling through a tunnel, under table and chairs
  - Rolling/rocking slowly on a therapy ball
  - Burrito- rolling up in a blanket



# Muscle Exercises tools (Proprioception)



- Finger Pulls – Hook the index fingers together and pull for three seconds. Repeat with each set of fingers.



- Desk Stretches – Grab one side of the back of the chair with both hands and twist your torso as far as possible in that direction. Repeat on the other side.



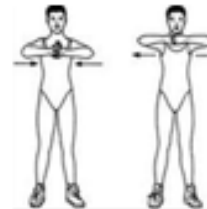
- Chair Push-Ups – Place hands on each side of chair and straighten arms to lift your behind off the chair. Repeat 5 times.



- Chair Pull ups – In sitting, place hands on each side of the chair and pull on chair as if you are trying to lift it up. Release and repeat 5 times.



- Wall and table push ups- do 10 push ups



- Push hands together and then do a tug of war with hands.



- Shoulder shrugs- repeat 5 times



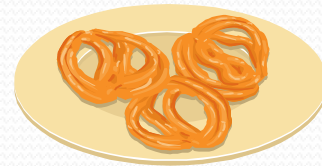
- Head squash- press and hold for count of 3. Repeat 3 times



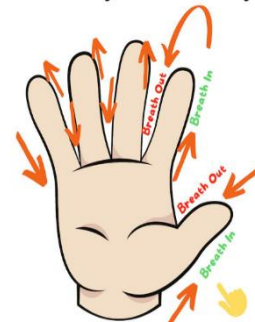
- A self-hug- hold for count of 5

# Mouth Tools

- Cold foods and sour foods - Alerting
- Warm foods, sweet foods and sucking - Soothing
- Chewy food - Helps keep focus and calm
- Crunchy food – Maintains alertness and attention
- Drinking from a sports bottle
- Chewing Gum
- Using an Electric toothbrush
- Chew Buddies
- Blowing games, balloon, straws
- Breathing Exercises



## Five Finger Breathing



## Blowing candles



Hold up your hand and pretend that your fingers are candles.



Take a deep breath in.



Using one SLOW breath blow across all of your fingers.



Repeat this several times.