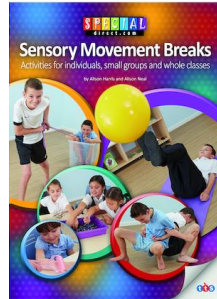


Sensory Movement Breaks (SD12338)



What is a sensory movement break?

A sensory movement break is an opportunity to support an individual to 'reset' or create a positive level of alertness so that they can focus and concentrate at their best. Movement is an essential part of our sensory system which has a direct link with regulating attention.



Young children move around all the time – think of how busy a Foundation classroom is! We then expect children to become more able to sit at a table and apply their brains to increasing cognitive challenges as they get older. Movement helps them to be able to be in the right state to work at their best.



Spotting the need for a sensory movement break



When considering if there is a need for a sensory movement break, consider the following:

- ❖ Knowledge of the group or individual's typical length of concentration and being able to intervene at an appropriate point.
- ❖ Be aware of changes in the environment that may impact on the group or individual response to the learning task.
- ❖ Is there external noise?
- ❖ Has this followed a long period of sitting?
- ❖ Are there more visual distractions in the room, such as pupils going in or out to the toilet, messages being brought from other classrooms and so on?

- ❖ Are the children getting fidgety and less able to concentrate?
- ❖ Are noise levels increasing?
- ❖ Are some children becoming disruptive to others?
- ❖ Is there appropriate engagement?
- ❖ Are some people sleepy or sluggish?
- ❖ If the children cannot access a run around on the playground due to wet play, this can be a clear indication that they are going to need a change of environment and a sensory movement break so that they are prepared for optimal learning.

Breakdown of the page



Bubbles

The activity

Blow some bubbles. Can the child pop them? Can they pop the ones up high, down low and to the sides? Can they catch one in each hand at the same time? Can they clap the bubbles to burst them? Can they stomp on them, or jump on them?

Why are we doing this?

Watching the bubbles fall develops visual tracking skills. Catching the bubbles develops eye hand coordination and a sense of timing. These skills are linked to the proprioceptive and vestibular senses as well as visual.

Clapping the bubbles to the right and left develops the ability to cross midline – by this we mean using the left hand on the right side of the body and vice versa. This is a very important skill in our development – as babies we tend to use the left hand for toys on our left hand side and the right hand for toys on our right hand side. Developing the ability to cross the midline of the body with right or left hand is important for daily life tasks and school tasks such as handwriting.

This activity also provides an opportunity for movement. It will be calming and regulating if carried out in a calm manner, slow and steady, watch the bubbles, clap only one. However it could also be alerting if done in a more excitable and faster manner, i.e. how many can you clap/stomp on. The adult needs to understand the purpose of doing the activity for the individual child and grade it appropriately in order to meet their needs.

Equipment needed

- Bubbles
- Space

How to grade

Here are two ideas to extend this activity:

- Roll a dice – the number showing is how many bubbles you must pop in each go.
- Make a dice labelled with body parts instead of numbers (right foot, left elbow, clap, head, right knee, bottom, etc – see Appendix for a cut out dice to make). Roll the dice, wherever it lands use that bit of your body to pop the bubbles.

The activity

A short paragraph that outlines and explains the activity.

Why are we doing this?

This section explains the skills that the children are developing during the activity. This gives purpose to the activity and enhances staff knowledge and understanding.

Equipment needed

To enable you to be prepared for the session, a full list of everything you need to deliver the activity is provided. Most of the equipment required are items that most settings and schools will already have access to.

How to grade

Information is provided explaining how the activity can be adapted to provide extra challenge for those who need it.

Image showing the activity

Each activity has an accompanying image



Example activity 1

BUILD A RHYTHM



The activity

- Give each table a card with an image of feet stamping/hands clapping/fingers snapping/thigh slapping/tongue clicking.
- One table starts off with a base rhythm using the body part and action on their card.
- Choose a pupil to be conductor – he/she decides which table goes next and adds in another sound. Continue until all tables are joining in, then the conductor stops each table in turn.

Why are we doing this?

- This task increases **tactile and proprioceptive input**. It also enhances pupils' **focus and auditory awareness**. They have to **sustain concentration** to maintain rhythm.

Equipment needed

- Pre-made cards

How to grade

- Work with the conductor to introduce more complex rhythms.
- Introduce bilateral movements – using right then left hand/foot.



Example activity 2

TACTILE TRAIL



The activity

- Prepare A5 size boards with a range of textures, one on each (e.g. sandpaper, fake grass, material stuck on in ridges, cotton wool, shiny card.) Stick high up on a wall at a challenging but achievable height.
- Follow a repeated trail around a corridor or route in your setting or school, with regular tactile boards placed high up on the walls. The pupil moves from one to the next, jumping to touch the tactile board each time, with one hand, then the other, then both.
- Move the tactile boards to new positions and add new textures to keep the activity fresh.

Why are we doing this?

- This activity provides **tactile input** along a trail and includes the opportunity for **effortful movement (proprioception)** along the way. It will help the child achieve a **calm alert state**.

Equipment needed

- A5 boards
- Textures (sandpaper, fake grass, material, shiny card)

How to grade

- Increase the number of boards.
- Increase the distance of your trail.



Example activity 3

SORTING HAT



The activity

Use a hat as a container for slips of paper that have movement instructions:

- Jumping Jacks
- Knee lifts
- Jogging on the spot
- Stamp and clap
- Pat your head, rub your tummy
- Head, shoulders, knees and toes
- Jumping on the spot
- March on the spot

When your class needs 'sorting', select a pupil to draw a paper slip out of the hat. Everyone does it for one minute. Use a timer.

Why are we doing this?

- The hat gives a pleasing focus and surprise element for the selection of a task and offers lots of **proprioceptive and vestibular challenge**. You can adapt this to provide whatever movements are appropriate.

Equipment needed

- Prepared paper slips
- Hat or any other container

How to grade

- Limited only to your imagination! You could include dance moves and do them to music. How about "The Twist", head banging to rock music, or a tasteful waltz?

