

Heavy Work Activities

The term "heavy work" refers to physical activities that involve pushing or pulling against the body.

When children with sensory processing challenges engage in heavy work, they tend to become more grounded and composed.

Heavy work exercises have been found to aid children in enhancing concentration, staying focused, and achieving mental calmness and regulation.

Even though these exercises are primarily designed for children with sensory processing difficulties, they can also benefit any child who needs to soothe or regulate their emotions in any given circumstance. Engaging in activities that require holding or pushing objects can serve as a replacement for touching people or objects in inappropriate situations.

Here is a list of some simple heavy work activities caregivers can use whenever a child needs some assistance in self-regulation.

- Yoga- Hold a group yoga session to help all children calm down before engaging in a quiet activity.
- Bear crawls
- Army crawl
- Crab walk
- Pull a wagon with objects
- Play catch with bean bags
- Carry bean bags
- Carry a pile of books
- Carry a bucket of water or sand
- Wheelbarrow walking
- Dig in the dirt or sandbox
- Play with Playdough
- Wall push-ups
- Chair push-ups – Have children push with their arms and lift their bottom and legs off the seat of the chair for a few seconds.
- Pushing a box across the room – fill a box with books or toys and push the box across the room.
- Pulling on a rope – tie a rope to a tree, pole, or secure door handle.
- Star jumps / jumping jacks
- Weighted backpack – place a few magazines in a backpack and encourage the child to walk around with the backpack for a few minutes.

