

HEAVY WORK

ACTIVITIES FOR THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

What is Heavy Work? : It is a type of sensory activity that involves pushing, pulling, or lifting heavy objects or items. It stimulates the proprioceptive sensory system which can help kids relax, remain calm, improve their focus, and strength.

- BOUNCE AND/OR BE SQUISHED BY YOGA BALL
- TRANSFER WET CLOTHES TO THE DRYER
- UNLOAD GROCERIES SUCH AS CANS OR JUICE
- GARDENING HELP (RAKE, CARRY STICKS, SWEEP)
- CRASH INTO MATS, PILLOWS, OR CUSHIONS
- PLAY IN BALL PITS
- WHEELBARROW WALK
- ROLL, PUSH, OR CARRY LARGE BALL
- TUG OF WAR WITH BLANKET, ROPE, AND/OR SCARVES
- JUMP (JUMPAROO, TRAMPOLINE, CUSHIONS, OR FLOOR)
- PUSH/PULL HEAVY ITEMS (WAGON, CART, OR BLOCKS)
- PICK UP, MOVE, STACK, AND PUT AWAY BOOKS
- CRAWL ON ALL FOURS, THROUGH TUNNELS, AND/OR OVER CUSHIONS



SENSORY MELTDOWN

WHAT IT IS, AND HOW TO RESPOND

What is a meltdown? It is different from a tantrum. Tantrums are goal-oriented. Once children get their way, a tantrum ends; a meltdown does not. Meltdowns are driven by the brain's flight-or-fight response and will pass after the child calms down. During a meltdown, a child is unable to reason, effectively communicate, and consider safety consequences. Their behavior is a response to a sensory overload. It is important to understand the child is not intentionally misbehaving.

HOW TO PREVENT MELTDOWNS

- Be proactive!
- Offer a break
- Use visual cues, schedules
- Use a calm down area
- Prepare for transitions, focus on the destination, not the departure
- Reinforce desired behavior
- Ignore negative behavior (if safe)
- Validate and label emotions
- Offer choices
- Offer sensory input (straws, heavy work, bouncing, etc.)

WHAT TO DO DURING MELTDOWNS

- Safety is the priority
- Use a calm voice
- Get on their level
- Do not attempt reasoning
- Use simple communication
- Use deep pressure
- Model deep breathing:
- Use a calm down station
- Use visual supports
- Release bite/ hair pull via the "Feed the Bite/Hand" method