

## Become a Detective and Observe your Child's Sensory Needs

- ◆ **See**-bright lights can cause glare and be irritating, natural or dimmed lights are more calming, adjust the computer screen so it is at eye level, try a visual schedule for chores or daily activities.
- ◆ **Hear**-minimize verbal directions if the environment is noisy, use headphones (digital volume between #2 and #4 to avoid damaging hair cells in the ears), use white noise.
- ◆ **Touch**-respect child's response to different types of touch input, terry cloth, tight and soft cotton or Lycra can be calming and soothing, experiment with small hand fidgets to support focus and attention.
- ◆ **Smell**-some scents are calming (lavender, vanilla) and some are alerting (peppermint, citrus, anise), talk with your child about scents that are uncomfortable such as heavy perfumes or certain cooking smells from the kitchen.
- ◆ **Taste**-to calm, alert and increase focus try slow breathing, suck on mild flavors or blowing activities, eat or suck sour, salty or spicy flavors, crunch or chew on resistive foods like carrot sticks, pretzels, gum or fruit leather, drink water through a straw.

## Tips for Creating a Work Space for Learning

Encourage proper posture to support fine motor skills.

- ◆ Hips, knees and ankles at 90 degrees
- ◆ Feet flat on the floor or on a foot rest for stability
- ◆ Desk height allows for arms to rest comfortably
- ◆ Screen is at eye level



For more information or to request a consultation, please contact Mollie Bivens, Occupational Therapist and Owner of Coast Allied Health.

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## Hidden Senses

In addition to our 5 well known senses, there are 2 hidden senses known as our body awareness sense (proprioception) and our movement and balance sense (vestibular).

## Heavy Work Works!

The concept of heavy work ties into our body awareness sense also known as proprioception. This system perceives sensation from the muscles and joints. Proprioceptive input enables us to know where each part of our body is and how much force is required for tasks. Examples of this input are jumping, climbing, digging, pushing/pulling objects and vigorous running. This input is universally calming and grounding. It can be used as a strategy to help increase attention and focus. Learn more about proprioception and heavy work [here](#).

## Don't Forget to Move!

Our movement and balance sense, also known as our vestibular sense, provides our body with knowing the position and movement of the head in relation to gravity and the speed and direction of movement through space. Use movement activities to help with balance, posture, coordination, eye movements, making transitions, attention, alertness and emotional regulation. Up and down movements (jumping on a trampoline, seesaw) help to wake up and get going while back and forth movements (rocking chair, swinging) help to calm down. Here's more information about this very [important system](#).



*Dear future,  
I am  
ready*

## Seating Alternatives

Consider alternative positions besides a traditional desk and chair to meet your child's individual needs. You may offer your child suggestions such as standing, laying on the floor on his/her belly (propped up with a pillow for additional support) or cozing up with a book in a bean bag chair, a hammock, or under a shaded tree.

## Parent Resources:

- ◆ <https://www.pbs.org/parents>
- ◆ <https://www.nhsa.org/covid-19-resources-parents>
- ◆ <https://pathways.org/>
- ◆ <https://out-of-sync-child.com/>
- ◆ The Out of Sync Child Has Fun, Kranowitz, C. S.
- ◆ 101 Activities for Kids in Tight Spaces, Kranowitz, C. S.