

Sensory Toys You Can Find at Home

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If your child struggles with a sensory processing disorder, you're always looking for activities targeted for growth and development. Thanks to [about.com](#), Terri Mauro, a children's special needs expert, created this list of fidgets, DIY toys, and activities that will keep your little ones engaged. And the best part is that you don't have to pay an arm and a leg for them!

It's simply amazing how many everyday objects around us can be used to help children with sensory development.

FIDGET TOYS

Fidgeting - something all kids usually do during long drives in the car, sitting in a waiting room; in essence, anywhere that exercises their patience levels. These fidgets are sure to keep them occupied and engaged.

- 1. Balloon filled with sand and knotted securely**
- 2. A smooth stone**
- 3. A palm-size sea shell**
- 4. An old set of keys**
- 5. A combination lock**

WEIGHED ITEMS

Consult an [occupational therapist](#) for the appropriate weight before attempting any of

these DIY projects. These items work best for a calming influence. Therapeutic companies sell the items listed, but you can make them yourself for a fraction of the price.

1. Weighted Blanket

2. Weighted Vest

3. Pencil Weight

4. Weighted Stuffed Animal

5. Body Weights

It's suggested that all of the above items are older items since you'll have to cut it open and sew them back when adding weights. See the [site](#) for details on how to make them.

ORAL MOTOR ITEMS

The items and game ideas below are great activities that strengthen the muscles in your child's mouth and prevents drooling.

Straw - Let your child try sucking something through a regular or twisty straw. (yogurt, or a thick substance)

Whistle - There are a variety of whistle choices available for kids. Some options are: a plain whistle, a plastic flute, a kazoo, or mini-trombone-type whistles.

Bubbles - Blowing bubbles is good for strengthening the muscles in the mouth. Just make sure they're actually blowing the bubbles and not simply waving the wand.

Cotton Ball Race - Who can blow the cotton ball across the table the fastest? This game is fun and can last for quite a while!

Plastic Necklace - Use inexpensive aquarium tubing from a pet store. It's a great chew option during the teething stages and can be refrigerated!

TACTILE EXPERIENCES

These objects are all about giving your child a variety of textured toys, putties, and squeezable items which help them with sensory integration. Most of these items you can find in your pantry!

Rice - Your kids can sink their hands into some fun! Add toys for them to find. Dried beans are an alternate option.

Bubbles - Some kids are more sensitive to slimy or sticky items but the activity of creating floating bubbles may help them to expand their tactile comfort levels.

Shaving Cream - Spray in a bathtub or shower and let your kids finger paint with it.

Sand - Sandboxes are perfect for children seeking tactile input.

Ball Pits - Inflatable ball pits can become quite expensive, but there are several places that allow your kid to play for the price of lunch or a drink.

References:

Mauro, T. (n.d.). Make Your Own Therapy Tools and Toys. Retrieved from <http://specialchildren.about.com/od/therapies/a/therapydiy.htm>