

Inclusive Developmental and Therapy Center

A Calm Body: A Sensory Support Home Program
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Some children feel the world more strongly than others. Loud sounds, scratchy clothes, busy places or being touched can feel overwhelming, while other children seem to crave constant movement, crashing and squeezing just to feel right. Both can lead to meltdowns, tears or a child who cannot settle.

This home program helps you notice your child's sensory needs and build gentle daily routines that help their body feel calm and organised. It is here to support your child, not to diagnose anything or replace a professional assessment. An occupational therapist can create a plan tailored to your child's unique needs.

♥ Who this program is for

- ✓ Children who are easily overwhelmed by noise, crowds or bright light
- ✓ A child upset by clothing labels, textures, haircuts or messy hands
- ✓ Children who constantly crash, spin, jump or squeeze into things
- ✓ Big meltdowns that seem to come from busy or noisy places
- ✓ A child who struggles to calm down and settle after excitement

⚡ Important – when to get professional help

This is a supportive home program, not a diagnosis or a substitute for an assessment. Please speak to a professional promptly if:

Behaviour that puts your child's safety at risk, such as running off or hurting themselves

Extreme distress most days that overwhelms family life

Food refusal so severe it is affecting your child's nutrition or growth

Your child loses skills or withdraws from people they used to enjoy

Sensory struggles that are getting clearly worse over time

☆ Your step-by-step roadmap

Move at your child's pace, not the calendar's — the “weeks” are a gentle order, not a race. Repeat any stage as long as it helps.

Week 1 – Notice your child's signals

Learn what winds your child up and what calms them down.

Watch for the moments and places where your child gets upset or overloaded.

Notice what soothes them — a quiet corner, a cuddle, a favourite blanket.

Jot down a few patterns so you can plan ahead for tricky times.

⚡ **Try** Look for the small early signs — covering ears, fidgeting, going quiet —
this: and step in before the meltdown.

Week 2 – Calming heavy work

Use deep, calming input that helps the body feel organised.

Give firm bear hugs and slow, deep squeezes when your child wants them.

Let them push, pull and carry — heavy cushions, a laundry basket, a loaded bag.

Try animal walks, wall pushes or a “squash” under a soft cushion.

⚡ **Try** This kind of slow, heavy “work” for the muscles is one of the most reliably
this: calming things you can offer.

Week 3 – Build a calm-down space

Create a safe place where your child can settle themselves.

Set up a cosy corner with cushions, a blanket and dim, soft light.

Add a few soothing items — a soft toy, a favourite book, a fidget.

Show your child it is a friendly resting place, never a punishment.

⚡ **Try** Offer the calm corner before things boil over, not as a “time out” after — it
this: is a rest, not a telling-off.

Week 4 – Ease everyday sensory triggers

Reduce the small daily things that overwhelm your child.

Cut out scratchy labels and offer soft, comfortable clothing.

Give warning and headphones or a quiet exit for noisy places.

Introduce messy play like sand or foam slowly, letting them touch tools first.

⚡ **Try** Let your child explore new textures with a spoon or brush before their
this: bare hands — control lowers the fear.

Week 5 – A daily calm routine

Weave small sensory breaks into a predictable day.

Plan short movement or heavy-work breaks before tricky moments.

Keep daily routines steady and predictable so there are fewer surprises.

End the day with a calming wind-down — a bath, deep pressure, quiet time.

⚡ **Try** A predictable rhythm to the day is calming in itself — surprises are what
this: most often tip children over the edge.

Tricks that make it work

- ✓ Every child is different — keep what helps yours and drop what does not.
- ✓ Stay calm yourself — your steady voice helps your child settle.
- ✓ Never force your child into a texture, sound or activity that distresses them.
- ✓ Offer calming input regularly through the day, not only after a meltdown.
- ✓ Give plenty of warning before changes and transitions.
- ✓ Notice and gently celebrate the moments they cope well.

How you'll know it's working

- Fewer or shorter meltdowns during the day
- Your child settling more quickly after getting upset
- More willingness to try new textures, sounds or places
- Your child starting to ask for or seek out what calms them



Is this based on real methods? This program draws on the occupational therapy idea of a personalised “sensory diet” — regular, tailored sensory input across the day — rooted in Ayres Sensory Integration.