



## Sensory & Motor Skills Activities To Try at Home

**Heavy Work** is a term used to describe *proprioceptive* input which comes from your muscles, joints, and ligaments. This input can have a calming and focusing effect.

**1 || PUSH A FILLED LAUNDRY BASKET.** Make sure the laundry basket is heavy enough that actually requires some work for your child to push it, but not too heavy that they struggle to push it. You can make it into a race or obstacle course. Some items you could fill it with are books, stuffed animals or any other random items from around your house.

**2 || PILLOW FIGHTS.** Good fun but please supervise, a pillow fight is a great way to get quick bursts of sensory input.

**3 || CRASHING.** Providing some controlled "crashing" experiences will help give input in a safe way. Bean bags, or a pile of blankets and pillows, can all provide a safe area to jump on.

**4 || JUMPING.** Something as simple as jumping can be great proprioceptive input. Trampolines are great for this. A skipping rope or jumping on a pogo stick are also great options.

**5 || WHEELBARROW WALKING.** This is a good old-fashioned activity that is amazing for heavy work. The child balances on their hands while you hold their ankles up off the ground. Then have them walk on their hands while you keep holding their ankles. You may need to hold at the knees or waist if your child needs more support with this. As they get better, add races, obstacle courses or sprints while wheelbarrow walking.

**6 || PUSH A SIBLING IN A WHEELBARROW...** and don't forget pushing an actual wheelbarrow!

**7 || PULL A CHILD IN A SHEET.** Use a large bed sheet, or even a fitted sheet and pull away. Have races or see how far they can pull in 10 seconds.

**8 || PUSH A SHOPPING TROLLEY.** Does your supermarket have those little child-sized trolleys? You do need to pay close attention and help your child to be aware of their surroundings, but this is a great heavy work activity that they won't even realize is beneficial for them. Older children can push a standard-sized trolley.

**9 || CARRY GROCERIES.** Encourage children to help you carry your food shopping or delivery inside. *REMEMBER TO WEAR GLOVES AND WASH HANDS WELL AFTERWARDS.*

**10 || CLEAN THE HOUSE...** and all the parents said "YES!" 😊 Pushing a vacuum, broom, or mop are great heavy work activities that require no additional tools or set-up. Simply helping out around the house is a perfect solution for heavy work at home.

**11 || WASHING WINDOWS.** Use a spray bottle to spray down the window (excellent heavy work for the hands!) and then use a cloth to wipe the window clean.

**12 || TAKE OUT THE RUBBISH.** Housework and chores can be amazing heavy work opportunities. Don't pass up the opportunity for taking out the rubbish. Emptying smaller rubbish bins into large bins/bags, carrying the bags/bins to the wheelie bin or pulling the bins out to the street for pickup are all great options. *REMEMBER TO WEAR GLOVES AND WASH HANDS WELL AFTERWARDS.*

**13 || SCRUB SURFACES WITH A BRUSH OR SPONGE.** Cleaning on the chalkboard or whiteboard, wiping down a table, or scrubbing off a dirty surface all give great proprioceptive input through the upper body.

**14 || HELP WITH GARDEN WORK.** Filling up a wheelbarrow and moving soil or rocks, or digging in the soil are all great options.

**15 || WATER PLANTS WITH A WATERING CAN.** Filling up a watering can and carrying it to water plants is another awesome heavy work activity. Plus it will get your child outside if they are watering plants in the garden or flower boxes.

**16 || WASH THE DOG.** If you have a pet, make sure to include washing that pet, especially dogs as part of your child's routine. This is great tactile and proprioceptive input with the fingers and arms.

**17 || WASH THE CAR.** Get the hosepipe, buckets, and don't forget actually pushing against the car to wash it! This is such a great heavy work activity, plus it's fun!

**18 || KNEAD DOUGH OR PLAYDOUGH.** This is a great heavy work for the fingers and hands. You can use homemade play dough (recipe: <https://www.growinghandsonkids.com/calming-no-cook-play-dough-recipe.html>) or have your child help you knead bread if you make it by hand.

**19 || CHEW GUM OR CRUNCHY FOODS.** Chewing gum or crunchy foods is like a mini workout for the mouth! Your mouth is full of proprioceptive receptors.

**20 || SIP WATER FROM A STRAW.** The act of sucking through a straw is another great proprioceptive activity using the mouth.

**21 || PLAYING WITH DAMP SAND.** Dig in the wet sand in a sandpit with a shovel or your hands.

**22 || RIDING A BIKE.** The simple act of riding a bike or trike is a great heavy work activity.

**Fine motor skills** generally refer to the small movements of the hands, wrists, fingers, feet, toes, lips, and tongue.

### **1) Paper Clip Slip**

Gather your supplies: paper clips, cardboard strip, bowl, timer.

Set a handful of paper clips on the table or in a bowl and see how many paper clips can you fit onto the cardboard in one minute.

This activity works on pincer grasp, grasp strength, as well as visual motor skills.

### **2) Egg Transfer Drop**

Gather your supplies: two bowls or baskets, 'eggs' (balls or play food), spoons, timer.

How many 'eggs' can you transfer and drop in one minute?

Place your 'eggs' into a basket or container and set out your spoons. Set out another container on the opposite side of the room or table.

The level of difficulty can be varied by challenging your child to use only one hand to scoop up the egg onto their spoon, use their other hand to balance the egg, put their hand behind their while carrying the egg, using their less-favoured hand etc.

This activity works on visual-motor skills as well as every-day life skills of holding the spoon and using it to scoop an item onto it.

### **3) Block Stacking**

Gather your supplies: wooden blocks, timer.

How many wood blocks can you stack 4 high in 1 minute?

This activity works on pincer grasp, grasp strength, visual motor skills, and gross motor skills (grading movement and strength so they don't knock over the towers).