

Alerting Activities

In general:

- rapidly changing/irregular inputs
- quick tempos
- music - lower frequencies will elicit movement (drums), while higher frequencies can engage attention (flutes, singing, cymbals)
- cold temperatures (including foods)
- light, brushing touch
- fast movement, especially spinning/rotational
- sour or spicy flavors
- fast-moving, bright, unpredictable visuals
- using muscles for “heavy work” of pushing, pulling, against resistance

Activities/Strategies:

- Swinging quickly on playground swing, especially with sudden changes of direction
- Spinning on a swing or other equipment (can quickly become over-stimulating – use caution!) Running, skipping, galloping for at least 1-2 minutes (any type of aerobic exercise, really)
- Rapid rocking/bouncing side to side
- Jumping in place (trampoline, jumping jacks, jumping rope, etc.)
- Motor breaks during school - stand and stretch, run an errand for teacher, walk to bathroom, etc.
- Push on wall as if to move wall
- Do “chair push-up” in sitting by lifting bottom off floor or chair, holding self up with arms
- Weight-bearing through arms via wheelbarrow walk, crabwalk, bearwalk, etc.
- Riding bike
- Pushing or pulling heavy furniture; putting chairs on desks & taking down
- Climbing playground equipment; crossing monkey bars
- Carrying a stack of books, laundry, groceries, or something else approx. 5% of body weight
- Drinking grapefruit, cranberry or other tart juice - try partially freezing it
- Popsicles or frozen grapes or orange sections. Try frozen pickle chunks!
- Pretzels, carrots, apples, granola, and other crunchy foods
- Drinking through a long, thin straw, or reg. straw w/thick liquids (stimulates deeper breathing) Blowing bubbles, whistle or other blown instrument (harmonica)
- Move cottonballs by blowing through a straw (can race cottonballs or play “soccer” on table)
- Play with “fidget toy” for hands, such as small koosh ball
- Dancing to rock, jazz, rap, or fast kids music
- Safe crashing: jump or fall into pile of pillows or mats; pillow fighting; play wrestling

Calming Activities

In general:

- slow, steady, rhythmic, repeated, predictable input
- slow and rhythmic music
- firm, steady, pressure touch or squeezing (think massage or a big hug)
- using muscles for “heavy work” (see note above under alerting activities)
- bland or sweet-tasting flavors
- slow-moving, dim, deep-colors for visuals
- neutral warmth
- slow linear movements forward-and-back or head-to-toe

Activities and Strategies:

- Sit on therapy ball or sit-fit during seated work
- Steady, slow forward/back movement on swing or rocking chair
- Rocking horse or see-saw; pushing off hard with legs
- Listening to classical music, steady drums, or nature sounds (water, birds, waves)
- Riding a bike up hills (pedaling against resistance)
- Pushing or pulling heavy furniture; putting chairs on desks & taking down
- Carrying a stack of books, laundry, groceries, or something else approx. 5% of body weight
- Push on wall as if to move wall
- Hold self above chair seat, weight-bearing through arms, hands to side of seat for “chair push-up”
- Erase or wash chalkboards
- Look at fish tank, snow globes, lava lamp, campfire, or other slow-moving visual
- Dimly lit room, and sparsely-decorated walls (“cool” colors)
- Eat chewy foods (send fruit roll-ups, bagels, dried fruit, cheese, gummy candy with lunch)
- Chew on Chewy Tubes or Theratubing
- Wear spandex clothing, like bike shorts or long underwear (can wear either under regular clothes)
- While in circle time or listening in seat, hold a lap weight (such as a large beanbag animal)
- Wear a weighted vest or compression vest
- Use a heavy/weighted blanket; read or work lying on floor with pillows stacked on top
- Wrap or roll-up in blanket or rug
- Crawl through a tunnel of about 3 yards of 18” cotton T-shirt ribbing (avail in fabric stores)
- Have an adult roll a therapy ball over body while lying on mat or rug
- Squeeze stress ball or other resistive “fidget toy” (putty, beeswax, art erasers)
- Deep pressure massage using brush, lotion or your hands

