

Dear Parents/Carers

RE: Occupational Therapy Support

My name is Kirsty and I am the Occupational Therapist at Ifield school. Since starting in September 2019, I have seen many of the children to provide advice on sensory and motor skill difficulties. Some pupils have specific targets and programmes that are incorporated across their school day and form part of their routines. These programmes help pupils to settle for the day, remain calm and develop their skills.

Now schools have closed to all pupils except those of critical key workers, your child may be struggling with the change in routine or knowing what to do with their time. Whilst the pupils are at home, I am happy to provide activity ideas for home to keep developing their skills and support their emotional regulation. Below are some general ideas of activities that may help whilst schools are closed.

Sensory Circuits – This is a series of activities that help to prepare an individual for the day ahead. Many pupils attend the circuit room at school to complete a circuit once or twice a day or may have circuits within their classrooms. The activities follow a specific sequence of alerting, organising and calming. I have attached a handout with ideas for sensory circuits at home. There are also lots of ideas of Pinterest and Facebook.

Movement activities can help us stay well and feel better about ourselves.

Proprioceptive Sensory Input - These are activities that place pressure through joints and muscles, often called heavy work activities. They are calming to the body; some individuals prefer them done to them whilst others prefer to be more in control and apply the pressure themselves. Activities can be made fun and included across the day, try different ones to see what your child prefers:

- Weightbearing activities – crawling under and through objects – can use dining chairs, tunnels, or under a bed.
- Resistance activities e.g. pushing and pulling – tug of war, stretchy toys, stretching an exercise band
- Carrying heavy objects such as toys in a bag or books.
- Oral activities e.g. chewy foods, crunchy foods (only if the child can manage these types of food) blowing bubbles, blowing through a straw – blow caterpillars or football.
- Deep pressure – using a body sock (can use a sleeping bag) big hugs, ball squashes and massaging, rolling the child up in a blanket like a sausage roll. Squashing play dough balls with hands.

Some of our pupils have individualised sensory diets in school, if you would like more information on your child's individual programmes, please do not hesitate to contact Ifield School.

Some pupils also participate in the clever fingers programme to support the development of their fine motor skills. If you would like more information regarding your child's targets and activity suggestions for home, please do not hesitate to contact Ifield School for further advice.

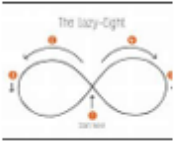

Yours faithfully



Kirsty Richards
Occupational Therapist



Sensory Circuits for home

Choose two activities from each column, always complete the activities in the correct order. If your child gets too excited by the alerting activity reduce the amount of alerting and do more organising and calming. The Facebook page Sensory stuck at home has some good video examples. The circuit should last about 15 minutes – 5 minutes in each section.

ALERTING	ORGANISING	CALMING
<p>Jumping on a trampoline for a set time or number of bounces</p> <p>Jumping over a skipping rope or along a line, sideways or forward and back.</p> <p>Bouncing on a therapy ball</p> <p>Running on the spot or up to the end of the garden / room and back</p> <p>Hopping- can mark out chalk spots to hop and jump on</p> <p>Go noodle – action dance songs on YouTube and other children's work out online videos.</p>	<p>Crawling under and over chairs</p> <p>Throwing balls/ bean bags at a target – whilst lying on their tummy (can lie on therapy ball)</p> <p>Using a scooter board or skateboard to lie on and push yourself along</p> <p>Animal walks – there are printable animal cards online – look up animal walk movement breaks.</p> <p>Lazy eights –  either drawing in the air or draw a sideways 8 and get the child to drive the car around the track without moving their body.</p>	<p>Children's yoga positions</p> <p>Proprioceptive activities – deep pressure</p> <p>Piling cushions on top of the child or ball squashes</p> <p>Using a handheld massager or spikey ball roller – on their arms and legs – slowly and with a regular pressure</p> <p>Listening to calming music</p> <p>Using a calm down jar – can make these at home –  instructions on the internet.</p>

<p>Step ups on the bottom step or a step in the garden x 10.</p>	<p> Balancing on Steppingstones or a beam – can use cushions for steppingstones. Be careful that the floor is not slippery under the cushions.</p> <p>Jumping holding a cuddly toy between their knees.</p> <p>Balloon volleyball or catch - place a spoonful of rice or lentils in the balloon to add a little weight (this will make it easier to catch).</p>	<p>Having a hug whilst looking at a book</p> <p></p> <p>Wall pushes – let your child face the wall, stand arm's length away – feet shoulder width apart, with hands flat against the wall at shoulder height and shoulder width. Ask the child to bend their elbows until their nose touches the wall – repeat x 10</p>
--	--	--

KLR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY LIMITED