

HEAVY WORK ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

SENSORY IMPLICATIONS:

Students with sensory processing differences often struggle to regulate sensory input from their environment, leading to feelings of overstimulation, anxiety, or distraction. Engaging in heavy work activities, which activate the proprioceptive system (responsible for body awareness and movement), can help calm and organize their bodies and brains. These activities, such as pushing, pulling, or lifting, provide deep pressure input that helps the nervous system regulate arousal levels, reduce anxiety, and improve focus. This "grounding" effect can support students in staying more attentive and organized during academic tasks, enabling them to better participate in the school setting.

HEAVY WORK ACTIVITIES:

- 1) **Chair Push-Ups** – Have students push themselves up from their chairs using their arms.
- 2) **Wall Push-Ups** – Let students press against the wall and do standing push-ups for deep pressure input.
- 3) **Carrying Books** – Assign students the task of carrying heavy books from one place to another.
- 4) **Stacking Chairs** – Have students stack and unstack chairs as part of classroom clean-up.
- 5) **Pushing Desks or Chairs** – Let students push desks or chairs to help rearrange the classroom.
- 6) **Wiping Down Desks** – Give students wet wipes or spray bottles to clean desks, which involves pushing motions.
- 7) **Pulling Resistance Bands** – Provide resistance bands for students to pull and stretch.
- 8) **Moving Classroom Equipment** – Ask students to help move heavy classroom items, such as bins or supplies.
- 9) **Filling and Carrying a Backpack** – Fill a backpack with heavy books and have students carry it around.
- 10) **Stacking Books** – Let students stack books or other classroom items that have some weight.
- 11) **Climbing Stairs** – If possible, have students take the stairs instead of using the elevator.



HEAVY WORK ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM – PAGE 2

HEAVY WORK ACTIVITIES:

- 12) **Pushing a Cart** – Allow students to push a heavy cart or rolling bin filled with supplies.
- 13) **Carrying Lunch Trays** – Encourage students to carry their own lunch trays or help others carry theirs.
- 14) **Tug-of-War with a Rope** – Organize a tug-of-war game using a sturdy rope for proprioceptive input.
- 15) **Squeezing Playdough or Putty** – Provide playdough or therapy putty for students to knead and squeeze.
- 16) **Weighted Vest** – If appropriate, let students wear a weighted vest for calming proprioceptive input.
- 17) **Pushing Against the Wall** – Instruct students to push against the wall with their hands or feet to release energy.
- 18) **Carrying Water Bottles** – Have students carry water bottles or other filled containers.
- 19) **Lifting Bins of Classroom Materials** – Ask students to help lift bins of classroom materials or supplies.
- 20) **Tearing Paper** – Give students large sheets of paper to rip or tear into pieces.
- 21) **Holding or Passing Heavy Objects** – Allow students to hold or pass weighted balls or objects during circle time.
- 22) **Sweeping the Floor** – Have students sweep the classroom floor with a broom or dustpan.
- 23) **Cleaning Whiteboards** – Let students erase and clean the classroom whiteboard with pressure.

SENSORY IMPACT:

These heavy work activities can help students feel more regulated, focused, and ready for learning..



ABOUT POSITIVELY MOXIE

Molly (a junior high school counselor and former elementary school teacher) and Jill (a school-based occupational therapist) have teamed up to empower teachers, counselors, therapists, and parents who want to teach young people the skills to better coach their brains for greater well-being and resilience. The science of positive psychology, counseling techniques, self-regulation, cognitive behavioral therapy, sensory processing, executive functioning, and brain science influences us! We understand our students and youth need as many "tools" in their toolbox as we can give them. Molly and Jill are passionate about creating relevant, high-quality, and actionable resources to address well-being and resilience skills for students!



IF YOU LIKE THIS RESOURCE,
PLEASE CONSIDER THESE PRODUCTS:

SENSORY PROCESSING EDUCATOR HANDOUTS

UNDERSTAND AND IMPLEMENT SENSORY STRATEGIES IN THE CLASSROOM

15 HANDOUTS

COLOR & B/W versions!

CLASSROOM / SENSORY ROOM / SPECIAL ED

SENSORY PATH KIT

30+ SENSORY-MOTOR MOVEMENTS

35 ANIMAL-THEMED SEQUENCES

SENSORY ROOM BULLETIN BOARD

VESTIBULAR (balance)

TACTILE (touch)

INTEROCEPTION (internal body sense)

PROPRIOCEPTION (body position)

SENSORY AVOIDER

SENSORY ESCAPE

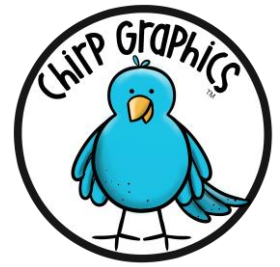
SENSORY SEEKER

SENSORY CRAVING

SENSORY SENSITIVE

OVER RESPONSIVE

CLIP ART CREDITS



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

