

Soak Your Senses



OT Sensory Soak - A Mini Guide for Home

Here are some thoughts and ideas on how to engage and soak all the senses during this new season of self-quarantine. Use what feels right for you and your family!

With warmth and in wellness,

Allison Rock

www.allisonrock.ca

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Hello!

Hello wonderful families!

I have put together a mini guide of sensory ideas for home use. All of our nervous systems are responding to the current state of the world and also the changes in our routines. We feel it and our children feel it, no matter what age and stage!

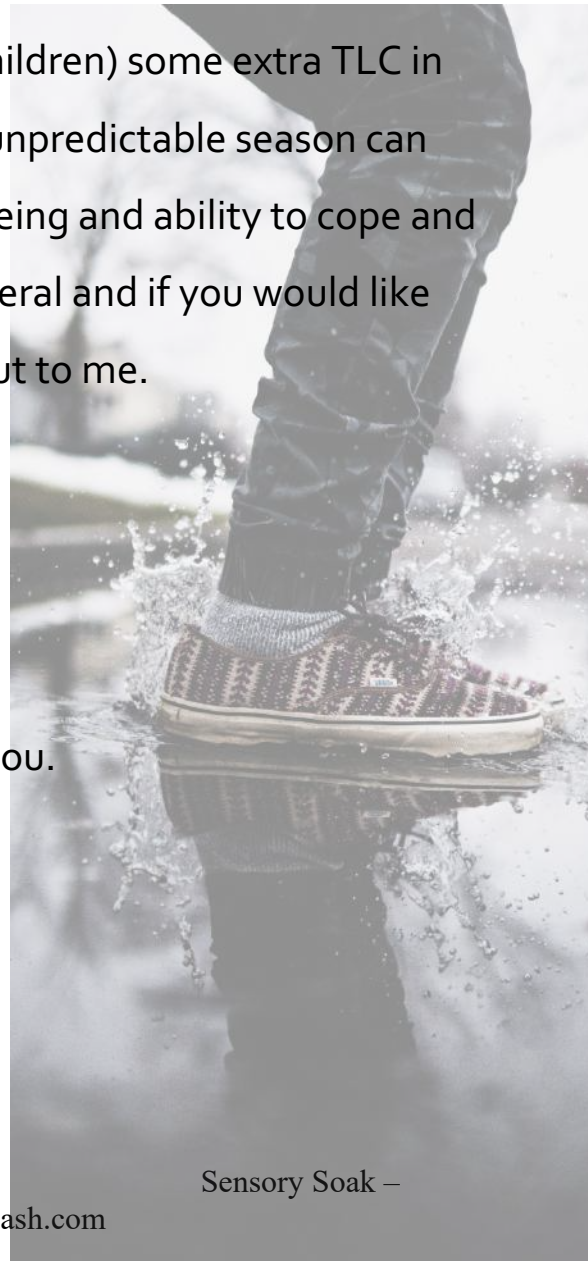
Giving our sensory systems (ourselves and our children) some extra TLC in specific and regular ways during this very unique and unpredictable season can help with our level of calm, regulation, sense of well-being and ability to cope and thrive. The sensory lists compiled for you here are general and if you would like more specific ideas for your family feel free to reach out to me.

I am here to support you!

Let your beautiful child/ children shine bright!

- Ask them what they need right now.
- Whether verbal or non-verbal they will show you.
- Be open to whatever response they give you.
- Express. Create. Move. Rest. & Simply **BE**.

Take it day by day.



Tactile

What tactile experiences feel good to you and your child?

Does your child seek or avoid any specific textures?

What is one tactile activity you can incorporate today?

In OT have you been given a brushing or massage input routine?

How can you have your child explore tactile input on their hands, feet, face and body?



Tactile

Tactile input at home may look like:

- Sensory bins / Sensory bin scavenger hunt
- Therapy putty games
- Cooking /baking together
- Paint / finger paint / kid safe foam soaps
- Backyard play – grass, dirt, exploring in nature
- Warm bubble baths
- Arts and crafts with string, fabrics, glue, dry pasta, rice or beans,
- Making 'stress' balls together with balloons and flour
- Creating a bathtub ball pit! Bathtub full of stuffed animals works well too! (no water in the tub).
- Scavenger hunt - finding soft, crunchy, rough, wet, dry, warm and cool textures together around your home or in your yard.
- Take your toys outside to explore in sand, dirt, mud, water, grass

Auditory

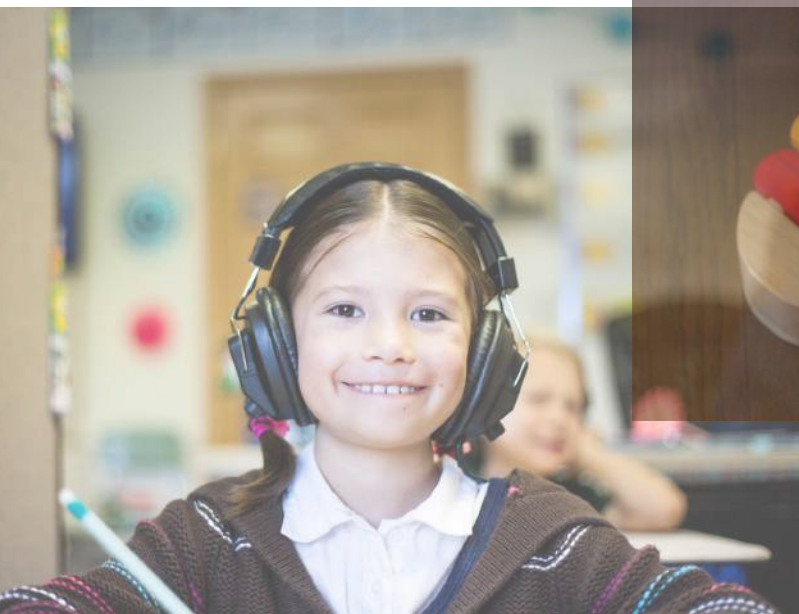
**What noises, music and sound experiences feel good to you and your child?
How can you help your child get more or less noise in moment of his/her day?**

Does your child seek or avoid any specific sounds?

What happy sounds can you create together?

Do you or your child need some quiet time?

What background noises may be impacting your day?



Auditory

Auditory input at home may look like:

- **Purposeful silence**
- **Whisper / whisper games**
- **Musical instrument crafts**
- **Nature sounds – see YouTube or mediation apps**
- **Musical instruments and making sound and music together**
- **Singing and making up songs**
- **Close your eyes together and describe what sounds you here inside/outside**
- **Music! Playful music, favorite tunes, calming classical music**
- **Headphones with music if one family member seeks noise and another seeks quiet**
- **Noise cancelling headphones for an auditory break**
- **Use different voices when reading a story together**
- **Listen to podcasts and stories read online**
- **Play with rain sticks**
- **Play with meditation bowl, can you close your eyes and hear the bowl ring out until the sound is gone?**

Olfactory (smell)

What smells feel nurturing?

What smells feeling calming?

What smells feel exciting?

What smells feel irritating and can be avoided?



Olfactory (smell)

Olfactory input at home may look like:

- **Scented candles**
- **Essential oils diffusing or on skin or in bathtub (please make sure to use high quality and kid safe oils if using)**
- **Baking together and enjoy the smell of fresh baked bread, cookies, cupcakes etc.**
- **Spices – put a few spices in little bowls and smell / guess the smells together (cinnamon, basil, thyme, etc.).**
- **Fruit – slice up a few fruits and smell them together before snacking on them**
- **Cooking and soups – what cooking smells are happening the background that the family can enjoy**



Visual

What do you and your child enjoy looking at?

How can you experience new visual input today?

Do you or your child need a visual break? Break from screens?

Do you have day light shining in through your windows?

Do you or your child need some low light rest time?



Visual

Visual input at home may look like:

- Turn of the lights (if safe to do so) and play with flashlights. Using your flashlight to find different objects in the room
- Calm lighting from a salt lamp
- Dim or brighten the lights
- Look at candles together
- Create shadow puppets
- Soak in some sunshine!
- Play with bubbles
- Play Eye Spy or Spot It
- Balloon games / ball games
- Puzzles, mazes and dot to dots
- Use bright paints in art activities
- Create a sensory water bottle (tutorials on YouTube)
- Use light up cause and effect toys with lights on and lights low
- Read a book or have your child close their eyes and be read to
- Window writing or writing on black paper / chalk boards
- Glow in the dark paint and glow in the dark toys
- Fiberoptic lights and bubble tubes

Proprioceptive

Has your child had the opportunity to move or get deeper pressure input today? (assisted or unassisted)

Does your child enjoy big hugs and cuddle time?

Can you add in new ways of movement today?



Proprioceptive

Proprioceptive input at home may look like:

- Obstacle courses in your home
- Bike riding
- Crawling games / tunnel / fort play
- Big tight hugs
- Therapy ball / peanut ball exercises (if OT provided)
- Go for a walk or wheeled ride
- Jumping – trampoline play, hoping games, learning to jump together
- Animal walks through your home
- Rolling – set up bowling pins or a tower and log roll together into them
- Burrito rolling – roll up snug in a blanket and squirm out
- Help washing windows,
- If accessible at home – lycra swing, monkey bars, climbers
- Sidewalk chalk and hopscotch games
- Bosu ball play
- Yoga together

Vestibular

Does your child like to spin?

Does your child get dizzy easily?

Has your child had the opportunity to roll, swing, spin, play upside down, twirl or dance today?



Vestibular

Vestibular input at home may look like:

- A dance break together (can adapt and be in your arms or wheelchair)
- Rolling on therapy ball / peanut ball on belly or back
- Swinging
- Spinning games / songs Eg: Ring Around the Rosie
- Laying on couch with head lower than feet / upside down play
- Yoga
- Obstacle courses that involve going under, over and through
- Spinning in an office chair
- Passing a ball over head and under legs
- Rocking chair, rocking horse
- Wagon rides



Regulating Activities

- Soaking in a variety of activities from each sense listed above can help our bodies and minds to feel more regulated and calmer
- As we give our nervous systems a variety of input we are more organized/regulated holistically
- Please be sure to BE SAFE as these recommendations are not specific to you or your child's specific needs but a general list of ideas
- Check in with your child as to what they need, more sensory input or less at any given moment in the day
- With any sensory input we also need to be mindful and checking in with each person individually; staying hydrated and well-nourished is also key!
- Watch for signs of dizziness and over stimulation. At times less is more!

Regulating Activities

Other regulating activities may look like:

- **Snuggle up on the couch to watch a show or movie**
- **A warm soothing drink or special treat together**
- **Drawing**
- **Writing or telling stories together**
- **Phone call or video call to friend or family member**
- **A walk**
- **Bean bag play**
- **Free play and one on one time with favorite toys and activities**
- **Holding space or any and all feelings that come up through the days**
- **Rolling on therapy ball / peanut ball on belly or back**
- **Alone time and giving each other space**
- **Mid-day bubble baths / bath play**

Balance

Balance looks different for each of us.

Some areas in our days that we can find balance and help our kids find balance are with:

- **Movement & Rest**
- **Together play & Solo play**
- **Warm drinks & Cool drinks**
- **Reaching out & Connecting in**
- **Imaginative play & structure games**
- **Special treats & Nutritious health snacks**
- **Following a recipe & Creative invention `**
- **Scheduled activities & Free time / free play**
- **Homework/ Therapy exercises & Taking a break**
- **Volume up / music on & Volume down / quiet time**
- **Following a yoga or dance video & Free style yoga or dance**
- **Painting with all the colours & Painting with just one or two colours**

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Reminders to you!

- During this time the pressure is off! Do what is right for you and your family and reach out to me if you would like help navigating what feels right at this time
- Get down to kids level (literally) to communicate with them
- Observe your kids openly and listen to them, they have so much to share with us and teach us
- Ask your kids what they need to make the day great each day, listen and follow through
- Find humor and laughter every day
- Lean into both what is comfortable and also what is uncomfortable
- Create
- Express
- Journal
- Stretch and move
- Love each other deeply
- Embrace and hold space for your own feelings/emotions as you hold space for your kids feelings/ emotions

Compiled List of Online Resources

How to talk to your children about COVID:

https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/how-to-talk-about-coronavirus-with-kids?utm_source=Understood+for+All&utm_campaign=8c69b3fa9f-02192020_familiesNL_highengagement_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_45fc52ce3d-8c69b3fa9f-337441191

Here are some online resources!

Learn In Color:

<https://learnincolor.com>

Cosmic Kids Yoga:

www.cosmickids.com/

Virtual Museums:

https://www.parents.com/syndication/museums-with-virtual-tours/?utm_campaign=parents_parentsMagazine&utm_content=internalsyndication_travelandleisure&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_term=FD51F848-6550-11EA-9FBA-CF782FEB5590&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR3llo37VCikCOhvMWu_BuOyzhPWSAP3MGbG63AbJMnYmy-eKqbiLINWzQ

Scholastic Free Resources:

<http://scholastic.com/?fbclid=IwAR3crpdwPIKDCrRvC3M5bLZGJ1Yaw8t1kY43-FtqCzRYLTxDnQLTc8kzSE>

And

<https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html?fbclid=IwAR3Xun61OXSNMz5fXrOcJAaeITCYkMbEPfEApPaAgiw7bdEsSfUtf68oyIU>

Free Online Learning at home:

https://funinfirst.com/free-online-learning-at-home/?fbclid=IwAR1RjZwlb_s2rSFv_53zttE-Vw8Mp7Lf1WtnLSI-OPwb5Qi-mMMWYPhDIro

Meaningful Exploration:

https://meaningfulexplorations.com/free-educational-resources-for-families/?fbclid=IwAR1QseUMmu_w-avez7ilogmfypk7gDbwPNxbkPAKIN4w-O_d4HswoxEaKA

Learning Tools:






<https://www.koaa.com/news/coronavirus/free-online-learning-tools-to-use-for-kids-during-covid-19-closures?fbclid=IwAR2bPzCxdkkojUYTjIC-3HVOE6PR9kYKGdMKzMjYdJuYn8-xrG5GYU98Hos>

Sensory Activities:

<https://www.thechaosandthelutter.com/archives/sensory>

KEEP LEARNING AT HOME

Free Online Resources

 pbskids.org	 play.prodigygame.com
 www.starfall.com	 www.khanacademy.org
 kids.nationalgeographic.com	 www.typingclub.com
 ABCMouse.com/redeem Use code: SCHOOL2568	 www.squigglepark.com
 scholastic.com/learnathome	 mysterydoug.com

www.funinfirst.com



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