

Heavy Work Idea List

Incorporating heavy work activities throughout the day is an effective way to provide opportunities for deep pressure input. Deep pressure helps calm the body and mind; organize the body and mind; regulate mood; reduce anxiety; and improve body awareness and coordination. Heavy work activities are those that incorporate pushing, pulling, carrying, reaching, and squeezing. Ideas for both school and home are included.

School

Place chairs up on tables at the end of the day or take down at the beginning of the day

Erase the room's dry erase boards

Wipe/scrub desks, tables, or counters

Carry crates or boxes filled with books or other materials (e.g., carry the classes returned books to the library; carry the playground equipment out to recess)

Use scooters (transport toys or puzzles from designated points; push another person on the scooter)

Wear a backpack with books or other materials

Do wall push-ups (i.e., push against the wall); for younger learners can say that the room feels small, and you need help making it bigger; this can be a whole class activity

Do chair push-ups (i.e., put palms on chair and push up so bottom lifts off seat)

March or run in place

Dance

Open doors for people; be the door holder

Use a manual pencil sharpener to sharpen class pencils for the day

Incorporate jumping/moving into academics (e.g., jump the math answer, jump the number of syllables in a word)

Tape work to a vertical surface (e.g., easel, wall) for them to work against gravity while writing, coloring, drawing

Carry and dump the class recycling bin

Use a watering can to water classroom plants

Squeeze spray bottles to clean surfaces or mist plants

Sweep

Vacuum

Use a hole puncher to help with classroom or office paperwork

Use a stapler to help with classroom or office paperwork or to hang papers on bulletin boards

Shred papers by hand

Complete gardening tasks for the school yard

Help rearrange the desks for a group activity

Help P.E. teacher fold and move gym mats

Push or pull A.V./Library cart

Climb stairs

Bounce a ball

Bounce on an exercise ball

Jump on a mini trampoline

Pour items (sand, beans, rice, water, etc.) back and forth between containers

Squeeze/knead theraputty or play dough (theraputty has more resistance)

Do yoga poses

Draw on the sidewalk with chalk and use a spray bottle of water to erase it

Drink through a straw or water bottle that requires a strong suck

Eat crunchy or chewy foods

Add therabands on chair legs to push and pull with feet/legs

Stand while completing classwork

Home

Help to carry in the groceries and put them away

Push, pull, or carry boxes/baskets with toys or books across the room or through the house

Take cushions off the couch and vacuum under them and put them back

Take cushions off the couch and "crash" into them and then put them back

Sweep (a push broom provides more deep pressure)

Vacuum

Take out the trash

Dust furniture; reaching above their head to dust provides additional deep pressure

Carry the laundry basket

Wipe off table after meals

Load/unload dishwasher

Push families' chairs under the table after meals

Use a watering can to water plants

Squeeze spray bottles to clean surfaces or mist plants

Rake leaves

Push a wheelbarrow

Help with gardening tasks

Mow the lawn

Shred papers

Fill bird feeders

Wash vehicles

Pull someone in a wagon

Have pillow fights

Dig in a sandbox

Participate in leisure activities such as gymnastics, karate, swimming, basketball, and other sports

When traveling, have them roll their own suitcase and wear a backpack

Push the grocery cart while shopping

Break down boxes for recycling

Climb on playground equipment or swing sets

Complete obstacle courses made from household items (e.g., crawl under the table, jump from one paper plate to another, jump up to touch a piece of paper hung high on the wall, crabwalk to the finish line)

Draw with sidewalk chalk on the driveway, sidewalk, or bricks of house then use a spray bottle of water to erase it

Create with playdoh or clay

Climb stairs

Do yoga

Do plank exercises

Mix batter or dough for cooking

Bounce a ball

Ride a bike/tricycle

Roll down a hill

Play tug of war

Blow bubbles/pinwheels

Pull and stretch out pull-tubes

Bounce on an exercise ball

Jump on a trampoline

Drink through a straw or water bottle that requires a strong suck

Eat crunchy or chewy foods

Stand to complete homework