

Sensory Processing Health and Wellness

Sensory Balanced Daily Schedules

Long breaks from school tend to mean unscheduled days. We all know it's important to establish a predictable routine, but how do you do that? A routine that works for your child and family will be different to your friends and neighbors. Here's our guide to building individualized, dynamic, sensory rich schedules.

Whenever you are building a schedule for your family remember to include whole body sensory rich activities.

Daily schedules should have a combination of alerting, organizing and calming activities throughout the day. When scheduling the day it is important to make sure that a child's sensory needs are being met. Once you decide on the routine you will be using we recommend you make and display a visual schedule for your family that uses pictures and words.

The Red-Green-Blue Sensory Routine

EARLY MORNING	GREEN activity incorporated into morning routine
MORNING	RED activity then GREEN activity*
LUNCH	BLUE activity (down time)
EARLY AFTERNOON	RED activity then GREEN activity*
EARLY EVENING	GREEN activity (engagement based)
EVENING	BLUE activity incorporated into bed time

* Top tip - children tend to be most productive after a red activity and in the context of that second green activity

Red Activities (Alerting):

These activities are always stimulating. They should be used to increase arousal or body awareness. Many demanding motor activities are "red" because of the increase in physical and cognitive energy they require. Children (and adults) need "red" activities throughout the day to stay regulated, to learn more demanding motor sequences and to burn off energy.

- Bouncing on a ball chair
- Swinging rotary, swinging-self linear
- Jumping on the trampoline
- Safe crashing and falling into cushions
- Play set or playground
- Stop/go, red light/greenlight
- Ninja warrior with crawling and climbing
- Chase games
- Pulling child in a blanket
- Dance party – music and movement
- Building a couch-cushion tower and then running and knocking it over

Green Activities (Just Right):

These activities help us get regulated and stay regulated. They are generally "organizing" and help us to sustain focus and attention. Green activities work best when they are social activities, where focus is 100% on the game and the relationships and everyone has a twinkle in their eye.

- Linear swinging
- Sitting in a rocking chair
- Wheel barrel walks on hands
- Carry a heavy weight to –anywhere
- Cooking / painting / building / crafts
- Rolling up in a blanket / burrito game
- Long strong hugs
- Pull heavy animals/ siblings in a blanket across the floor
- Using a weighted pillow or animal while doing academic / craft activities
- Yard work (digging, moving firewood)
- Making forts

Blue Activities (Calming):

These activities are calming and organizing. They help to decrease arousal after a stimulating activity or to relax before nap or bed. These can be really important to incorporate when you start to see signs of dysregulation (rigidity, disorganization, frustration). Usually, taking a few minutes to reorganize and reengage, buys a lot more cooperation than other methods. The environment and space play an important role in supporting blue activities.

- Have a quiet space just for going to "blue" (use the fort you made!)
- Chewing resistive food (bagel, tootsie roll)
- Drinking a smoothie through a straw
- Massage (not tickle)
- Taking 10 deep breaths
- Sit on a bean bag and read a book
- Turn off the lights/dim the lights
- Weighted blanket/weighted animal for a "seat belt" while reading or coloring
- Using a slower quiet voice
- Blowing a pinwheel or bubbles or pretend candle
- Squeezing into a small safe space