

Sensory Diet Chart

General guidelines are offered, but the child's response should be carefully watched. The same activity may be calming at one time and alerting at another. For example, adults sometimes chew gum to calm themselves when stressed, and to alert themselves when tired. You will need to try a variety of these sensory motor tools to find what works for you. You will also need to try a variety of the tools to find what works for your child.

	To Calm	To Alert
Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use soft light. • Use no lights. • Block distractions using a screen, room divider, or study carrel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use bright lights. • Use a focused light on an object.
Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing softly. • Play soft classical or nature music. • Speak in a monotone or whisper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide music with varied pitch, sound, or an uneven or fast beat. • Speak with a high and low voice.
Touch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pat or stroke rhythmically on child's back. • Stroke a stuffed animal. • Hold or wear something warm. • Hug, if accepted. • Sit with a pillow on lap or surrounded by pillows. • Use a lap desk (pillow with hard top). • Roll up in a blanket. • Rest hands on child's shoulders. • Fold arms against body • Sit in a womblike place (tent or box). (<i>Enclosed spaces frighten and alert some children</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide light touch to palm. (<i>Some people calm to moderately light touch</i>) • Hold something cold. • Hold a fidget item in hand). • Dress in cool clothing. • Gently but quickly rub the skin.

Adapted from Gilbert, Anderson, Kurtz, & Roche Outen, 1995.

	To Calm	To Alert
Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rock, roll, swing, or bounce slowly and rhythmically. • Seat push-ups (raise bottom off chair using hands). • Wall push-ups (push against wall with hands). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change positions often, exercise, jump, dance, and jiggle. • Jump on a mat or bounce the child on lap. • Pass out papers, books, get water, erase the board, deliver messages.
Oral-Motor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suck mild flavors. • Use a straw to blow a hanging Mylar balloon or streamers. • Blow tissue paper wads into a container. • Drink from straw. A narrow straw and thick liquid requires more effort. • Blow soap bubbles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crunch and lick food. • Eat salty, citrus, sour, or smoked flavors. • Suck lemonade ice pops. • Lick fingers after making batter. • Chew on child's toy designed for chewing. • Blow whistles with moving parts. <i>(Don't use whistles around pets that may become agitated)</i> • Allow the child to have a cup of ice water throughout the day. • Allow frequent water fountain breaks.

Adapted from Gilbert, Anderson, Kurtz, & Roche Outen, 1995.