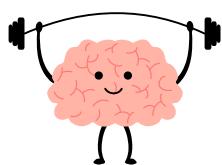


# Heavy Work

Lots of children benefit from heavy work activities to help them focus, channel their energy, and participate with their peers.



Heavy Work is any activity that pushes or pulls the body, placing pressure on joints and muscles.



Heavy work provides children with input and awareness of where their bodies begin and end. It also helps children learn to regulate themselves.

## WHEN TO USE HEAVY WORK:

- Throughout the day as sensory breaks
- Directly before a seated activity or activity that requires attending for longer periods
- When children show you their bodies need movement in unsafe ways (e.g., running, climbing, etc.)

## WHAT DOES HEAVY WORK LOOK LIKE IN PLAY?

### Circle Time Activities

- Animal walks (e.g., bear/crab walks, snake crawls or frog jumps)
- Marching, jogging or stomping in place
- Playing parachute games
- Drumming or rhythm sticks

### Free Play

- Bouncing or rolling on a therapy ball
- Building a fort using chairs, pillows, sofa cushions, and blankets
- Lying on your tummy to read, do a puzzle or colour
- Deep squeezes, weighted stuffed animal or lap pad
- Doing push-ups against a wall or on the carpet on the floor
- Wheelbarrow walks: Educator/peer holds child's legs and helps them walk with only their hands on the floor
- Tug-of-war: Use a blanket, sheet or skipping rope to pull. Stand, sit, kneel, or lie on your tummy.

### Art/Sensory

- Pouring items such as dry beans, dry rice, or water back and forth between containers. The larger the containers, the heavier the work.
- Squeezing a sponge, smashing playdough or using a spray bottle.
- Ripping paper or cardboard: Use old newspaper, junk mail, Amazon boxes, or cereal boxes.

### Outdoors

- Pulling a wagon
- Climbing and jumping
- Raking and shoveling
- Moving large loose parts such as stumps, planks, tires, etc.

### Helper Job Ideas

- Helping with a cooking project or making playdough by stirring the batter.
- Carrying a basket of toys, a backpack of books, or stacking the large wooden blocks.
- Helping with sweeping, wiping down tables or countertops, scrubbing the toys, washing the equipment outdoors, etc.