

All about

POSITIVE PARENTING

Newsletter for Parents

Summer 2012

Sensory Needs of Children



Sensory input is just as important as your child's need for food throughout the day. Just as you may jiggle your knee or chew gum to stay awake or soak in a hot tub to unwind, children need to engage in stabilizing, focusing activities too.

Activities that perk your child or calm them down are effective in the moment and help to restructure your child's nervous system over time so that they are better able to:

- Tolerate sensations and situations they find challenging.
- Regulate their alertness and increase attention span.
- Limit sensory seeking and sensory avoiding behaviours.
- Handle transitions with less stress.

Each child has unique sensory needs. Generally, a child whose nervous system is "over-aroused/active" needs calming input, while the child who is more "under-aroused/passive" needs arousing input. A qualified occupational therapist can use their advanced training and evaluation skills to develop a sensory diet for your child — or you!

Sensory Based Activities for Families

Young children learn best by experiencing the world with their senses. They need to see, feel, hear, smell and even taste things to understand them fully. When children play using their senses - called "sensory play" - they are learning. The more they have to use their senses, the more completely they learn.

Sensory experiences provide children with quality opportunities to promote their communication, reasoning, problem solving and fine motor skills. Interestingly, materials and toys used in sensory activities don't necessarily have to be elaborate or expensive. With a little creativity and the use of household items, parents can engage their children in any of the activities below to enhance their language skills as well as their understanding of concepts such as colours, sizes, shapes, textures and sounds in a fun and sensory enriched quality time.

Windchimes: Use equal number of old keys and pieces of equal length ribbon or yarn, a Mason jar lid or any type of suitable ring. Tie each old key to one end of each ribbon or yarn and tie the other end onto the ring. With your child's help, secure the wind chime in a breezy area and wait for the wind.

Waterplay: A big bowl or an old baby bath tub can be used with some tools from the kitchen. (e.g. cups, funnels, basters, ladels, jugs, measuring cups/spoons, sponges and squirt bottles.) Parents may also add food colouring and/or soap for added interest.

Finger painting: Introduce your child to finger painting by setting out red, yellow, and blue finger paints. Have your child wear an apron or adult-sized shirt. Forget the mess and encourage your child to try new things.

Expand on the learning process by labeling, commenting and using open ended questions to build on your child's existing skills gradually.

Splash Pad Fun



With a warm spring turning into a promising summer, our thoughts turn to inexpensive and fun things to do with our children. On warm sunny days why not try one of the many splash pads that operate within Peel Region.

Splash Pads are areas created for water play that have no standing water, which eliminates the need for lifeguards, and is safe for children of all developmental stages. Typically there are ground nozzles that spray water upwards, and structures that shower water downwards. Some offer moveable nozzles similar to those found on fire trucks to allow children to spray each other. Surfaces are usually rubberized and the water drains immediately. Typically the water is either freshwater, or recycled and treated water that is at least the same level of quality as swimming pool water standards. No lifejackets or floaters are needed. Parents can relax and enjoy watching their children have fun or they can splash alongside them to keep cool in the summer heat. Remember to come prepared for the day with sunscreen, towels and water bottles to stay hydrated.

Most splash pads are free or have a minimal charge. Visit the website below for locations and information about the splash pad nearest you.

www.toronto4kids.com/Kids/Seasonal-Fun-Summer/Splash-Pads-in-the-Greater-Toronto-Area

Around Town

Spring and Summer Festivals in Peel

Once you move to Peel, you'll find many events and festivals for your family's entertainment. Come one, come all and enjoy what Peel has to offer.

Here are some of the events and festivals in Peel:

Mississauga

Bhangra Dance Festival
Carassauga
Festivals of Cultures
Mississauga's South Asian Heritage Festival
Mississauga International Children's Festival
The Bread and Honey Festival
Mississauga Waterfront Festival
Southside Shuffle Jazz and Blues Festival

Brampton

Carabram
Brampton Fall Fair
Flower City Festival
Brampton's Farmers Market
Filipino Fiesta in the Square
Holstein Rodeo Weekend
Brampton Latin Festival
Caledon
Canada Day Strawberry Festival
Headwaters Arts Festival

Information is also available online at:

brampton.ca • mississauga.ca • caledon.ca

Cooks Corner



Kid tested and approved!

PENNE WITH CHICKEN, BROCCOLI & FETA

- 1 tsp olive oil
- 3 chicken breasts, diced
- 1 head of broccoli
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme (or 1 tsp dried)
- ½ cup balsamic vinegar (optional)
- 5½ oz feta cheese, crumbled
- 1 package whole wheat pasta

Cook pasta according to directions and set aside. Meanwhile, steam broccoli until tender. Heat oil over medium heat. Add the chicken and thyme to pan and sauté for one minute. Add the stock and vinegar and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring, for 3-4 minutes. Add broccoli and cook 1 minute more. Toss with pasta in a serving bowl and top with feta cheese. Serves 6

For more healthy recipes, visit peelregion.ca/health/eating/recipes

For Families / For Parents

The Three R's - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

We're not thinking about your garbage, instead we're thinking about many other aspects of your living. Think about how you purchase items and throw them away, including clothing, household items, toys and plants. There are alternatives to shopping at retail stores and garden centres that might meet your needs by offering less expensive items that are gently used. Here are some places where you may be able to find what you're looking for at a fraction of the price:

- Garage sales
- Home garden plant sales
- Community sales
- Thrift stores
- Mom to mom sales

You can have a garage and plant sale at your home or rent a table at a mom to mom or community sale, which are usually advertised by the promoter and draw a lot of people. If your time is limited, contemplate donating items to a thrift store or charity instead of throwing them away.

Check out your local paper or have a stroll around your neighbourhood to find out about these events. In addition to saving money and freeing up valuable storage and closet space, reducing, reusing and recycling can be fun for the whole family!



Children's Services



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Region of Peel
Working for you
Human Services