



WHAT IS PROPRIOCEPTION?

Proprioception

*Have you ever walked up the stairs without looking at your feet, carried a heavy grocery bag, or known how hard to push a door open? You can thank your **proprioceptive system** for helping you do those things!*

Proprioception is our body's ability to understand where it is in space and how much force our muscles and joints are using. Information from our muscles and joints helps the brain coordinate movement, posture, balance, and everyday activities.

Supporting Proprioceptive Needs

Many everyday activities naturally provide proprioceptive input. You can help children explore what feels good to their bodies through activities such as:

- *Jumping, climbing, or running*
- *Pushing or pulling a laundry basket*
- *Carrying groceries or a backpack*
- *Animal walks, yoga, or stretching*
- *Playing with resistance bands or play dough*
- *Helping with gardening or household chores*

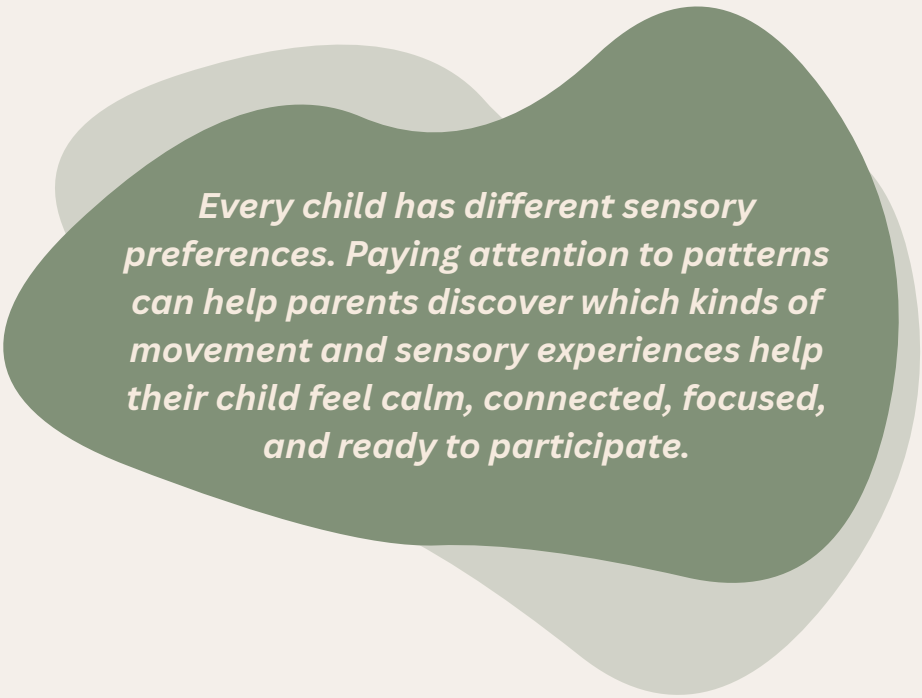
You may hear these activities described as “heavy work.” They involve pushing, pulling, lifting, squeezing, or moving against resistance.

Why Does Proprioception Matter for Mental Health?

Proprioception isn't just about movement. Proprioceptive input can also play an important role in helping children feel organized, regulated, and comfortable in their bodies.

Some children naturally seek more of this type of sensory input. You might notice a child who loves jumping, climbing, wrestling, crashing into pillows, squeezing things, receiving big hugs, or carrying heavy objects. Other children may have difficulty judging how much force to use and accidentally play too roughly, press too hard with a pencil, or bump into people and objects.

These behaviors aren't always a sign that a child is intentionally being wild or disruptive. Sometimes their body may simply be looking for more sensory information.



Every child has different sensory preferences. Paying attention to patterns can help parents discover which kinds of movement and sensory experiences help their child feel calm, connected, focused, and ready to participate.