



Wrestling Play for Heavy Work

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Heavy work refers to pressure or stretch through the muscles or joints of the body.

This type of action can assist in regulating focus and modulating energies.

Heavy Work can be achieved in play in many different ways including jumping, pushing and pulling activities.

In this activity children are engaging their vestibular systems (sense or movement) and proprioceptive systems (awareness of body position) as well as tactile (touch) systems.

Many children love to wrestle with their parents and siblings – this can be an ideal heavy work activity.



Finding creative and engaging ways to support your child's sensory system is a key way to help them regulate their energies and emotions.

Play Wrestling may be one for you

Here are some guidelines to make play wrestling most beneficial

- Keep it low
 - Pressure through joints and muscles is increased if you play close to the ground – crawling and commando crawling are ideal positions
 - Pretend to be ants / cockroaches / mice / dogs or anything else that keeps low to the ground
- Key points of control
 - Grabbing and pulling at limbs is not ideal and can result in injury
 - Place hands at key points of control during play. When in four point kneel, these points of control are:
 - Shoulders and Hips
- Set boundaries
 - Have a physical area which is set aside for wrestling play
 - Ensure that it is a safe area:
 - No breakables nearby
 - No furniture with sharp corners
- Set time limits
 - Building this activity around a game helps to set time limits
 - Eg Place some puzzle pieces or action figures at one end of the room. Have your child try to get them past you to the other end of the room. Once all the figures / pieces have made it across, the wrestling game comes to an end.
 - In this way the game has a definite end point
- Create obstacles and uneven surfaces
 - Placing pillows or mattresses on the floor creates an uneven surface to wrestle over.
 - This promotes further challenges to core stability and added pressure through muscles and joints
- Use breath control
 - Creating Power Sounds can reinforce the organising aspects of wrestling play by encouraging 3 dimensional breathing
 - Encourage long exhale sounds during play
 - SSSssss
 - Tarzan sounds
 - Ooohh Aaahhh
 - Long vowel sounds
 - Roars
- Calm down slowly
 - Wrestling is an active an engaging game. A child needs some time to calm down afterwards.
 - Slowly bring down the energy within the game towards the end.
 - Finish with a massage / thumb wrestle / big hug / deep breathing / a walk outside