

Movement isn't just exercise. It's how our bodies feel safe, ready, and supported.

# Understanding Sensory Circuits

A gentle guide for parents, carers, and educators

Sensory circuits are simple, movement-based activities that support regulation, body awareness, and emotional wellbeing. They can help children and young people feel more organised, calm, and ready to engage in daily activities.

♥ Sensory circuits are not about fixing behaviour. They are about supporting nervous systems.

## WHAT ARE SENSORY CIRCUITS?

Sensory circuits are short sequences of movement and sensory activities that support the body and brain.

They can help with:

- ♥ regulation and emotional wellbeing
- ♥ focus and attention
- ♥ transitions between activities
- ♥ reducing overwhelm
- ♥ body awareness and coordination
- ♥ feeling safe and grounded



## WHY DO MOVEMENT AND SENSORY INPUT HELP?

Movement and sensory input send helpful information to the brain and body.

This can help to:

- ♥ regulate the nervous system
- ♥ reduce stress and tension
- ♥ improve mood and resilience
- ♥ increase readiness for learning and connection
- ♥ support transitions and change

♥ Different bodies have different needs. What works one day might not work the next. Flexibility, choice, and connection are key. ♥

## NOT A ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL APPROACH ♥

There is no perfect circuit. The goal is not to do every activity, it's to offer supportive movement and sensory experiences that meet individual needs.

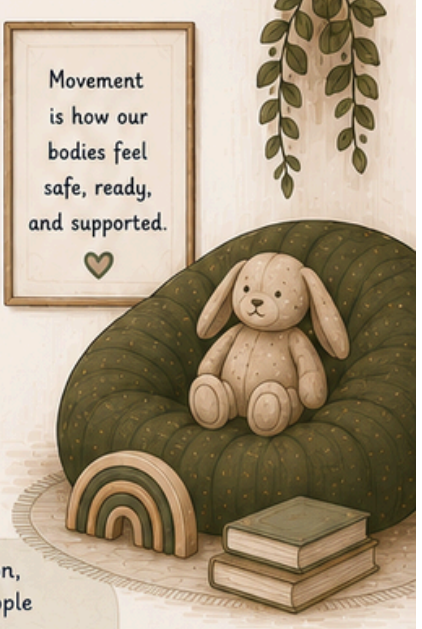


## SUPPORT, NOT EXPECTATION ♥

Circuits should never feel like a demand. They are an invitation to help the body feel more balanced, calm, and supported.

♥ When we support regulation, we support learning, connection, and wellbeing. Movement is a need. Understanding is support. ♥

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## THE 3 STAGES OF SENSORY CIRCUITS

Different bodies need different things. Use these stages as a flexible guide, not a rule.

<p><b>1</b> WAKE UP MY BODY Prepare &amp; energise</p> 	<p>These activities help increase alertness and get movement into the body. They can help boost energy, attention, and focus.</p> <p>Great for transitions, before learning time, or when feeling sluggish.</p>	<p>Examples might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ Jumping</li> <li>♥ Running</li> <li>♥ Animal walks</li> <li>♥ Climbing</li> <li>♥ Trampolining</li> <li>♥ Heavy work (pushing, pulling, carrying)</li> </ul> 
<p><b>2</b> HELP MY BRAIN FEEL ORGANISED Organise &amp; regulate</p> 	<p>These activities provide proprioceptive and vestibular input to help the body feel more organised and in control.</p> <p>This is the 'just right' zone. A calmer, more balanced state.</p>	<p>Examples might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ Wall pushes</li> <li>♥ Carrying or lifting</li> <li>♥ Yoga or stretching</li> <li>♥ Scooter boards</li> <li>♥ Obstacle courses</li> <li>♥ Balance activities</li> </ul> 
<p><b>3</b> CALM &amp; RESET Calm &amp; recover</p> 	<p>These activities help the body slow down, release tension, and recover. They support calm, rest, and emotional regulation.</p> <p>Use after busy times, when overwhelmed, or before rest.</p>	<p>Examples might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ Deep pressure (heavy blankets, hugs)</li> <li>♥ Quiet stretches</li> <li>♥ Breathing activities</li> <li>♥ Rocking or swinging</li> <li>♥ Fidgets</li> <li>♥ Listening to calming music</li> </ul> 

There is no 'right' way to do a circuit. Follow your child's cues, be flexible, and trust what their body needs in the moment.

## GENTLE REMINDERS

-  All behaviour is communication. Movement may be what their body is asking for.
-  Regulation comes before learning. A regulated body is more able to engage and learn.
-  Flexibility is key. What works today might not work tomorrow.
-  Co-regulation matters. Your calm helps their body feel safe.
-  Small, supportive steps build big shifts over time.

You know your child or student best. You don't need a perfect circuit – just connection, compassion, and support that meets their body where it's at.



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## GENTLE MOVEMENT IDEAS

These are invitations, not instructions. Different bodies enjoy different things on different days. Choose what feels good, skip what doesn't, and follow your child or students lead.

### WALL PUSHES



Stand facing a wall and push with both hands. Helps with heavy work and body awareness.

### CARRY & LIFT



Carry a backpack, a box of books, or a full laundry basket. Lifting and carrying provides deep pressure input.

### ANIMAL WALKS



Try bear walks, crab walks, frog jumps, or inchworm walks. Fun ways to wake up the body!

### STRETCH & YOGA



Gentle stretching or yoga poses can help release tension, increase body awareness, and support regulation.

### JUMP & BOUNCE



Jumping on a trampoline or bouncing gently helps release energy and improve focus.

### CLIMB & PLAY



Climbing, playground equipment, or safe challenges help build strength, confidence, and coordination.

### DEEP PRESSURE



Weighted blankets, tight hugs, or firm cushions can provide calming deep pressure input.

### OBSTACLE COURSES



Create simple obstacle courses using pillows, chairs, cushions, or boxes. Great for coordination and regulation.

### RESISTANCE BANDS



Pulling, stretching, or pushing against resistance bands can help provide organising proprioceptive input.

### MOVEMENT BREAKS



Short movement breaks throughout the day can help reset the body and improve focus.

### PUSH & PULL



Pushing or pulling heavy items like a trolley, laundry basket, or heavy box can be very regulating.

### ROLL & SPIN



Rolling on a therapy ball or in a blanket, or safe spinning can help some bodies feel organised.

### HEAVY WORK



Activities like moving furniture, stacking books, or gardening can provide organising heavy work.

### BALANCE ACTIVITIES



Walking on balance beams, stepping stones, or lines can support balance and focus.

### OUTDOOR MOVEMENT



Walking, hiking, or being in nature can help the body feel calm, grounded, and connected.

Remember: movement looks different for every body. The goal is connection, regulation, and feeling safe in your body.

### NOTES & IDEAS

What movement ideas might we try? What does our child or student enjoy? What helps them feel most supported and regulated?

Blank lines for notes and ideas.

### A FEW GENTLE TIPS

- Follow your child or student's lead.
- Offer choices and notice what helps.
- Keep it playful and pressure-free.
- Celebrate small moments.
- Consistency is helpful, not perfection.



When we support movement, we support regulation, learning, and wellbeing.