

Oral Input

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The following ideas should be incorporated at home as directed by your occupational therapist to help your child in organizing his/her oral sensations. These tasks can help increase awareness (stop mouth stuffing), decrease defensiveness, and decrease drooling. Your therapist has checked the appropriate activities designed to meet your child's oral needs.

- _____ 1. Perform massage in circular motions on your child's cheeks with firm pressure. Also massage above and under the lips.
- _____ 2. Use a washcloth to perform above massage around child's mouth.
- _____ 3. Have child eat a small Popsicle before meals (to increase oral awareness).
- _____ 4. Chewing can be used as an organizing technique -- have child crunch on crushed ice, cheerios, and other small crunchy food items.
- _____ 5. You can also have your child eat chewy/tough snacks; for example, bagels, licorice, gummy bears, bubble gum, slim jims, etc.
- _____ 6. Have child eat strong and/or sour flavors for an alerting effect; for example, sour straws, tear jerkers, lemonade pops, etc.
- _____ 7. For a calming effect use sucking and sweet flavors; for example, have child suck on a piece of hard candy, keep a sports water bottle on his/her desk at school, use suckers, and use straws in drinks.
- _____ 8. Have child drink thick shakes through a straw, or juice boxes through a tiny straw.
- _____ 9. Play tongue poking games, poking tongue into side of each cheek, poking through fishy lips, going in circles inside of lips.
- _____ 10. Try to incorporate toys that need blowing, blow up balloons, small windmills, and bubbles.
- _____ 11. Let child chew on rubbery objects such as boat key chain, thera-tubing, or nuk brush.
- _____ 12. Use an electric toothbrush for teeth brushing.
- _____ 13. Use a small spoon at mealtime.
- _____ 14. Use rubber-coated utensils.
- _____ 15. Place an upright mirror (a make-up mirror) in front of child's plate during mealtime to help increase awareness.
- _____ 16. Massage your child's upper and lower gums inside of his/her cheeks.
- _____ 17. Have your child imitate your funny "mouth" faces.
- _____ 18. Practice blowing bubbles with a variety of bubble wands (this requires increased attention to the mouth, and breath forces).