Hand activities: Calming the sense of touch (plain version)

Developed by Saskia Grassie, Children's Occupational Therapist.

These strategies can help calm the sense of touch before, after and during mealtimes and sensory play.

**Brisk rubbing**

Teach your child how to quickly rub their palms together until they feel warm. If liked, teach them how to briskly rub the backs of their hands too.

**Prayer Press**

Place palms together in front of chest with fingertips pointing upwards. Rest your hands against your chest. Keep elbows out to the sides and positioned so forearms are parallel to the floor. If your child wants added pressure, place your hands over theirs and press them together. Press hands together firmly for a count of 5.

**Monkey Pull**

This is quite hard for younger children, but included here as some children love it. Interlock the fingers of both hands as in the picture. Squeeze fingers tight together and then pull hands in opposite directions and hold for a count of 5.

**Hand Sandwich**

Invite your child to place one hand flat down on a table or on the floor. Now place one of your hands on top of theirs. Invite them to put their other hand on top of yours. Now, cover that hand with your second hand and press down firmly for a count of 5.

**Sit Squash**

On a chair, with feet on floor, sit on hands and straighten arms. Encourage your child to sit as tall as they can. Hold for a count of 5.

**Table Press**

Place hands flat on a low table or a firm chair. Hands need to be roughly in line with shoulders. Straighten arms and then press down hard into the table or chair. Hold for a count of 5.

**Fingertip Press**

With the pads of your thumb and first finger, firmly pinch the tip of your child’s thumb and then each finger in turn. Hold each digit for a count of 3. If your child needs you to do this more quickly count 2 for each. Repeat on the other hand.

**Vibration**

If your child likes the sensation of vibration, offer them a small handheld battery-operated massager to hold for a few minutes.

**Massage**

Give your child’s hands a massage with talc, cream or just on bare skin. Keep touch moderately firm.

**Firm wipe with flannel or cloth**

Wipe as if massaging your child’s hands. Try different movements and different textures of cloth, flannel or wet wipe to see what your child likes best.

Scan the QR code for more information.