

Children and Young People's Occupational Therapy

Oral Motor Programme

Some children frequently mouth non-food items which may mean they are seeking oral sensory stimulation. Oral motor input is known to be organizing for our nervous system, meaning that it provides us with sensory input that helps us feel calmer down and more regulated.

The focus of an oral motor program is to provide consistent oral motor sensation and stimulation through the day.

Blowing

- ❖ Blowing Games- Find some blowing games that your child enjoys. For example, blowing bubbles, blowing feathers or blowing through a straw to make bubbles in a bowl of water.
- ❖ Blowing runny paint over a page using a straw to create a pattern.
- ❖ Play with whistling toys to make music.
- ❖ Blow Ball Game- play this at home where she blows the ball and catches it before it falls down.



Blow a Kazoo

- ❖ This is also an inexpensive "instrument." The kazoo will not only help your breath control, but it will also help with vocal control as well.

Why?

Because you have to hum to get any sound out of a kazoo.

At first you can try to make a simple humming sound. As you progress you can try to vary the pitch of your hum and even try to play a simple tune (like, "Mary had a Little Lamb").



Sucking through Straws

- ❖ Suck juice and smoothies through a re-useable straw. The thicker the liquid, the more resistance and oral feedback it will provide. (make sure you clean the straw appropriately)
- ❖ If this becomes easy use twirly straws, or those that wrap around a cup



Crunchy/ Chewy Foods

- ❖ Encourage your child to eat crunchy or chewy foods such as carrot sticks, celery sticks, pepper sticks, crackers, apples, dried fruit (but not too much as it contains a lot of sugar)

Chewy toys

- ❖ Chewy toys can also be effective. They come in different textures and resistance levels. E.g.: the Chewy Tube (a safety lanyard can also be purchased for the chewy tube to attach to) or the Ark Chewy brick stick.



Chews can be attached to the child's clothing so they have immediate access to chew this rather than chew their clothing or other items. For young children please make sure that chews are not placed around a child's neck but rather clipped to the inside of a pocket.

Older children may prefer chewlery that look more like regular pendants or bracelets. See a range of products available from <http://www.sensorydirect.com/>

Vibration

- ❖ Trial using a vibrating electric toothbrush or vibrating
- ❖ Use vibrating toy
 - Let your child become used to the vibration by encouraging her to play with the toy in her hands first
 - Use along the jaw line; encourage her to do this herself
 - Work to getting closer to the mouth
- ❖ A mini textured massager can be used to massage the cheeks and around her mouth.
<http://www.superduperinc.com/products/view.aspx?pid=OM518>

