

OUT AND ABOUT WITH THE OUT-OF-SYNC CHILD: FUNctional Strategies to Help Kids Stay Regulated

Carol Stock Kranowitz, M.A.



1. Before Setting Out

Get ready with Secret Code, Sensory Prep, and FUNctional Activities at home.

Secret Code

Any Number...	or Gesture...	Is Your Child's Reminder to:
27	Put on imaginary eyeglasses	Read the scene.
49	Tap chest, cock head, smile	Ask, "May I ...?" (have a turn, ask a question, join the circle, try that toy, take a cookie, pet the cat...)
62	Shake head slightly, smile	Say, "No, thank you."
63.7	Nod head, smile	Say, "Yes, please, thank you."
85	Pat pockets and imaginary backpack	Check for all his/her gear (homework, backpack, lunchbox, jacket, soccer ball, party gift, house key).
999,999	Sweep hand from head to toe	Do "Sensory Prep."

Sensory Prep

Sensory System	"Have I ...?"
Tactile	Put on clothes that feel "just right"?
Proprioceptive	Done some stretching? Done some heavy work activity (pushed, pulled, lifted, or carried a heavy item, like the laundry basket)?
Vestibular	Swung? Run around the dining room table? Jumped on trampoline?
Visual	Got sunglasses?
Auditory	Got noise-canceling headphones?
Olfactory	Got lavender sachet?
Gustatory	Got chewing gum or lemon tarts?
Interoceptive	Eaten some protein recently? Used the toilet?

Two FUNCTIONal Activities

Lucky Nosh (with thanks to Aubrey Lande, OTR/L)

What You Need: The food that helps to arouse, organize, or calm your child, according to:

- Texture:
 - Chewy gum, granola bar, fruit leather, licorice
 - Creamy pudding, custard, yogurt
 - Crunchy Raw vegetables, apples, cereal, popcorn
 - Smooth and thick peanut butter, hummus, strained fruit
- Taste:
 - Salty pretzels, chips, crackers
 - Spicy salsa, chili, pizza
 - Sweet milkshake, grapes, dried fruit
 - Sour lemon ball, pickle, unsweetened yogurt, cranberry juice
 - Savory (umami) meatballs, cheese
- Temperature:
 - Cold ice cream, snow cone, frozen juice bar, ice chips, chilled orange slices, frozen grapes (slightly thawed)
 - Hot chicken broth, cocoa



What to Do:

- You establish a routine to repeat each time your child sets out for a challenging or potentially overstimulating activity.
- Your child bites, chews, crunches, sucks, or licks his Lucky Nosh before soccer, party, etc.

Develops and Enhances:

- Oral-motor skills
- Focus, attention, and calm

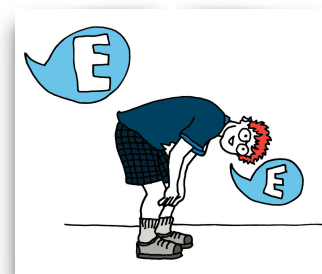
Sound Stretch (or, Vowel Growl) (with thanks to the late Don Campbell)

What You Do:

- Say, “Let’s call out the vowels, long and loud! A, E, I, O, U!”
- Start with hands on thighs: AAAA (Make “A” shape overhead.)
- Knees: EEEEE (Make lowercase “e” with curved arms.)
- Ankles: IIII (Make long tall skinny “I.”)
- Toes: OOOO (Make “O” overhead.)
- Heart center: UUUUU (Face partner and stretch “U” out to her, then back to heart center.)

Develops and Enhances:

- Auditory modulation and discrimination
- Body awareness
- Vestibular processing
- Eye contact



2. During the Outing

Do FUNctional activities to carry over therapeutic gains while out in the community.

Levitation (with thanks to Diana Henry, OTR/L)

What You Need: A chair or park bench

What You Do:

- Push down with your hands and raise your bottom off seat.
- Stay up as long as possible.
- Repeat.

Develops and Enhances:

- Proprioception
- Bilateral coordination
- Balance
- Upper body strength



Shape Stretch

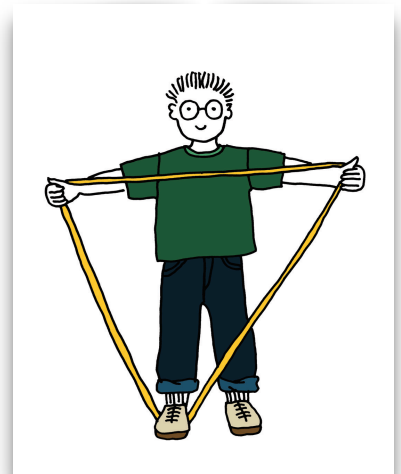
What You Need: Exercise band, ends knotted (or bicycle inner tube with valve removed)

What You Do:

- Ask, “How many sides does a triangle have? How can you use three body parts to make a triangle?”
- Repeat: square, rectangle, vertical/horizontal line, pentagon

Develops and Enhances:

- Body awareness
- Proprioception and motor planning
- Visualization



Repeat My Beat (with thanks to my grandson Aaron)

What You Need: Surface to tap (thighs, table, drum, floor, bus stop pole)

What You Do:

- Say, “Listen to the sounds my hands make on the table.” Tap your hands one, two, one, two in a slow and steady rhythm.
- Say, “Make your hands copy my hands. Repeat my beat.”
- Vary your rhythm and tempo, and have child repeat.
- Take turns.
- Get up and stamp feet or jump the patterns.

Develops and Enhances:

- Auditory processing
- Proprioception
- Laterality
- Gestural communication
- Emotional Quotient



Mystery Movement Dice Game (with thanks to the late, great Janet Wright, OTR/L)

What You Need:

- Two large, differently colored dice
- Six stick-figure illustrations of movements, such as jumping jacks, push ups, nodding head, “Floppy Noodle,” “Levitation,” knee bends, stretches, etc., glued to the sides of one die

What You Do:

- Say, “I’ll roll the dice. The picture on one die tells you what to do. The number on the other die tells you how many times to do it. Look, these dice say, ‘Do three Floppy Noodles.’ ”
- Take turns shaking the dice and doing the actions.

Develops and Enhances:

- Postural control and praxis
- Tactile, vestibular, proprioceptive, and visual senses
- Communication and social interaction



Pokin' O's (with thanks to Jane M. Healy, PhD)

What You Need:

- Crayon or marker
- Pen or toothpick
- Newspaper

What You Do:

- Say, "Color all the O's in this newspaper paragraph."
- When child has done that, say, "Here's a toothpick. Poke a hole through all the O's."



Develops and Enhances:

- Visual discrimination
- Eye-hand coordination, bilateral coordination, and fine-motor skills

3. After the Outing

Review the FUNctional Activities of the day.

My Sensory Day

What You Need:

- Your spot at your child's bedside
- Pen and a paper with alphabet running down left margin

What You Do:

- Say, "Let's alphabetize the great things you did today."
 - A = shouted AAAAA
 - B = Bit frozen grapes
 - C = Colored all the O's on the page
 - F = did three Floppy Noodles
 - J = Jumped to the beat of "Jingle Bells"
 - L = Lifted and carried the Laundry basket
 - P = Poked holes through all the O's
 - R = Raised my bottom off the park bench
 - S = Stretched the exercise band into the biggest triangle shape in the world
 - T = Tapped the beat of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"

Develops and Enhances:

- Visualization
- Memory
- Self awareness and sense of belonging
- Emotional Quotient