

# Pediatric Development Center



~ Newsletter ~  
June  
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We provide occupational therapy evaluation, treatment and consultation for children with developmental delays, autism/Asperger, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, sensory processing disorders, attention, behavioral concerns, handwriting, and other areas of weakness.

Contact us for further information:

125 Presumpscot St.  
Portland, ME.  
(207) 699-5531

## **Good Resources:**

[Southpawenterprises.com](http://Southpawenterprises.com)  
[tlc.howstuffworks.com/family](http://tlc.howstuffworks.com/family)



## **Taking a Sensory Diet on the Road**

***Deanna Macioce, MS,  
OTR/L***

Summer is almost here which means soon the kids will be out of school and you may be packing up the bags to venture out for your yearly "summer" vacation.

From the disruption in daily routines, to the over stimulation and excitement, traveling with kids is never an easy task, especially for children with sensory processing disorder. However, there is no reason to feel that you are unable to enjoy a vacation even if it takes a little extra effort to plan. Before you even begin to pack the suitcases, as parents you need to identify both what type of vacation setting and means of travel is most ideal for your family. You want to make sure that you try your best to keep some parts of your daily routine intact, but remember that change and flexibility are also good for your kiddos.

Whether you are going to be traveling by plane, car or train, there are some strategies that will help ease the trip for any child. Make sure you are well equipped with the right toys, music and movies, but it is also important to ensure you have a variety of regulatory options available to help to maintain a daily sensory diet.

For the child who finds comfort in tactile play, pack a bag full of tactile toys that are both fun in the car and outdoors. Any of the stretchy rubber balls and animals are great for this and travel easily. Put together gallon size baggies of various media including beans, rice, or dry pasta. These are even ideal when waiting at a restaurant. In addition, take advantage of the natural situations that present themselves. For example, if you are taking a trip to a state park, allow your children to get close to nature by hiking through the creeks, playing in the mud, and exploring the bugs and insects. If you are headed to the beach, allow them the time to play in the water and sand. And for those children who are hypersensitive to some of

these inputs, give them the opportunity to experience them within their comfort zone.

If your child has extra energy and tends to need lots of movement, then planning a vacation that involves swimming, beach playing, and hiking is right up your alley. To allow for movement breaks while traveling in the car, choose music that encourages motions. Make stops frequently, choosing restaurants that have play areas, and state parks that have playgrounds or rest stops that allow your child to run around. Although this will add time to your travel, it will definitely pay off in the end with a happier and more regulated child.

If your child seeks out deep pressure, swimming is an excellent proprioceptive input activity. In addition, allow your child the comfort of traveling with weighted equipment. From using a weighted blanket in the car or on the plane to wearing a weighted hat or shoulder wrap while at the beach, amusement park, or just relaxing will help keep them calm and regulated. In addition, if your child is following the

Deep Pressure Proprioceptive Technique Protocol remember that the brushes are small enough to travel anywhere.

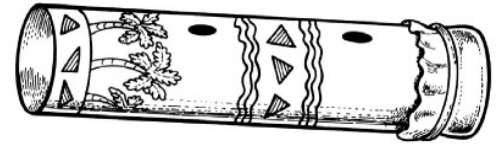
For those children who crave oral input, packing items to provide this is easy to do. In the car allow them to take their drinks through a straw, and pack tough chewy items for snacks such as Tootsie Rolls, sourdough pretzels, carrots and gum. In addition, when making a pit stop, give them a whistle or some bubbles to blow.

Although it may take extra planning, traveling with children can be lots of fun. Work with your child's therapist to set up an ideal sensory diet based on your travel destination and his or her needs. Remind yourself that the time you get to spend with your child and the memories you create will be worth all the extra work. Happy and safe travels to everyone!

### Cool Kazoo

With a cool kazoo, kids can make music without years of practice. All they need for this easy musical activity are the kazoo they make

themselves and a good song to hum. Then it's on to buzzing along with songs on the radio, or playing in time to the music while marching around the room.



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### **What You'll Need:**

- Paper towel tube
- Markers
- Waxed paper
- Rubber band
- Scissors

**Step 1:** Decorate the paper towel tube with markers.

**Step 2:** Wrap a piece of waxed paper over one end of the tube.

**Step 3:** Secure the waxed paper with a rubber band.

**Step 4:** Carefully cut two holes in the tube, as shown in the illustration.

**Step 5:** Play the kazoo by humming your favorite song into the open end of the tube. For other interesting sounds, make more kazoos with tubes of different diameters, thicknesses, and lengths.