

Humber Sensory Processing Service

Community Services for Children
aged 0-18 years



Peanut Ball, Therapy Ball and Dolphin Cushion Strategies

We need body awareness to balance and co-ordinate our movements. Being aware of our body position in relation to ourselves, others, and the environment around us helps us to move more accurately when we participate in the activities that we do every day. Poor body awareness can result in appearing clumsy, tripping over things, or running into things.

When children experience sensory processing differences, different strategies and tools can provide sensory input to help their bodies feel calm, alert, and ready to learn.

Sensory Systems

Using Peanut balls, Therapy balls, and Dolphin Cushions help to feel calm, focused, and ready to learn. They use senses such as **vestibular** (movement), **proprioceptive** (body awareness), and **tactile** (touch) input to support regulation, focus, and motor development.

We gain **Vestibular** input through rocking, bouncing, rolling and general movements, which supports balance and knowing where our body is in space. It provides input for the **proprioception** sense, this helps to use muscles to push, pull and balance on the equipment, which helps to become stronger, learn how to control our body better and build up body awareness and core strength.

In addition, these items of equipment can give **tactile** input through different textures and surfaces that the equipment is made from.

These tools are often used to promote regulation, improve posture and supports children to sit better, pay attention and feeling ready to focus before, during and after activities.



Peanut Ball

Peanut Balls are shaped like an elongated oval with a dip in the middle, making them ideal for children who need extra support with balancing. They promote bilateral coordination, core strength, postural control, and can be used for rocking, bouncing, or rolling to deliver deep pressure and movement input.



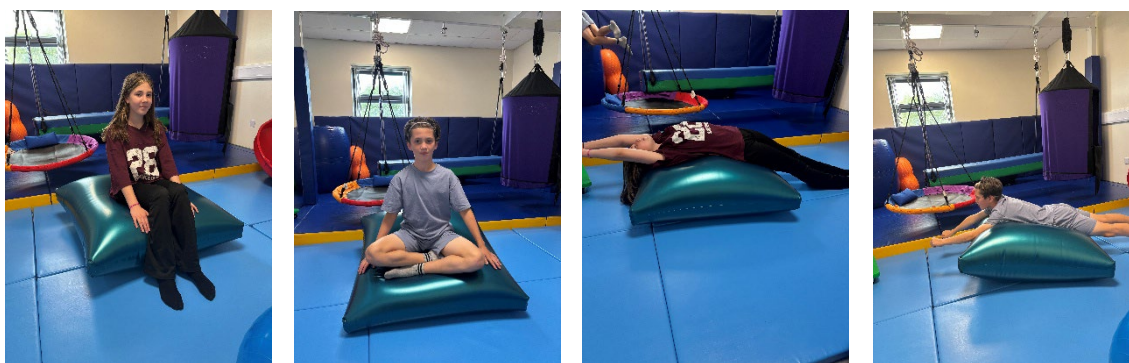
Therapy Ball

Therapy balls are big round exercise balls. These can be tricky to balance on but helps with balance reactions, using core muscles, and body awareness. They are excellent for maintaining alertness, as well as for activities like pushing, rolling, or lifting, these give your muscles heavy work, which helps your body feel calm and organised.



Dolphin Cushions and Wobble Cushions

Dolphin cushions are air-filled wobble cushions that provides gentle movement and sensory feedback when a child sits, stands, or kneels on it. The unstable surface encourages good posture, strengthens core muscles, and gives both **vestibular** (balance) and **proprioceptive** (body awareness) input. For some children, using a dolphin cushion during activities can help improve focus, reduce fidgeting, and support regulation in a fun and engaging way.



Wobble cushions are good pieces of equipment that allow you to sit on them whilst sat on a chair or on the floor. The textured surface adds tactile stimulus, whilst the unstable base delivers gentle vestibular and proprioceptive input, helping children who benefit from movement to stay focused during table-top tasks.



Co-Regulation

Using these tools can also be a valuable opportunity for co-regulation, where an adult joins the activity to help the child match their emotional and physical state to become calm and to regulate. Sitting on the floor together and gently rolling the ball back and forth, bouncing in rhythm, or mirroring movements can strengthen connection, build trust, and provide predictable sensory input. Speaking calmly, using consistent patterns, and maintaining eye contact (if comfortable for the child) can help them feel safe, grounded, and supported during sensory play.

Safety Tips

Always supervise children during use, ensuring that the equipment is the right size for their height and abilities. Encourage slow, controlled movements rather than fast and uncontrolled bouncing or rocking. Use the equipment on a non-slip surface and keep the surrounding area clear of obstacles. For younger children or those with reduced balance, provide extra support such as holding hands or positioning the ball near a wall.

For advice of therapy ball measurements suitable for your child please visit:-

<https://connect.humber.nhs.uk/resource/therapy-ball-measurements/>



For more advice and strategies like this, you can visit our website:

<https://connect.humber.nhs.uk/service/humber-sensory-processing-hub/home/>

Or you can contact us with a question on the email address below:

hnf-tr.humbersensoryprocessingservice@nhs.net

