

Inclusive Developmental and Therapy Center

A Calm Body: A Sensory Support Home Program

inclusivetherapycentre.com · +92 314 6040262

✳️ Written by the Inclusive Developmental and Therapy Center therapy team · **medically reviewed by Dr Muhammad Suffyan**, MB BS (GMC 8023727) · Last reviewed July 2026

✓ Can I help my child at home?

Yes, you really can. Help your child's body feel calmer and more organised by working out what they avoid, what they crave, and folding small, soothing routines into an ordinary day. This free program breaks it down into simple weekly steps, built from proven therapy techniques — things any parent can do at home, in everyday moments, at no cost. It doesn't replace a professional assessment where one is needed, but for a lot of children it makes a real difference, and it never does any harm.

Go at your own pace — a new, gentle focus each week.

Download the whole program as a printable PDF to keep.

Includes the signs that mean it's worth getting a bit of extra help.

Sensory difficulties mean a child's brain handles everyday sounds, textures, smells and movement differently from most children. Some children are overwhelmed by all of it and pull away. Others cannot get enough and crash, spin and squeeze their way through the day. Both can end in meltdowns. This free home program — one of our **step-by-step home programs for parents** — helps you work out which way your child leans, and what actually settles them.

The two directions look very different from the outside, and many children lean one way for sound and the other way for movement. Find your child in the panel below before you start Week 1 — the pattern you spot decides which ideas are worth your time.

Two directions sensory difficulty takes

Over-sensitive — pulls away

- Covers ears, hates labels and haircuts
- Gags on new food textures
- Melts down in crowds and bazaars

Sensory-seeking — chases more

- Crashes, spins, squeezes into tight spots
- Chews sleeves, collars and pencils
- Cannot sit still, touches everything

Many children are both. Slow, heavy work calms both.

Most of us were taught five senses. Occupational therapists work with three more, and those three are usually the ones causing trouble at home. Proprioception is the sense of where your body is, coming from your muscles and joints. The vestibular sense is balance and movement, coming from the inner ear. Interoception is the signals from inside the body — hunger, thirst, needing the toilet. A child who crashes into the sofa is usually chasing proprioception. A child who spins is chasing vestibular input. A child who never seems to notice they need the toilet may be missing the interoception signal. Our **guide to the sensory and motor side of development** sets out how these pieces fit together.

It also helps to know the difference between a tantrum and a sensory meltdown. A tantrum has a goal — the biscuit, the phone, the toy — and it usually stops once the goal is met or clearly refused. A meltdown is an overloaded nervous system spilling over. It has no goal, rewards and consequences do not touch it, and your child is not choosing it. A meltdown needs less input, not more talking. If you are not sure which one you are watching, **how to tell a tantrum from a meltdown** walks through the signs.

We are straight about the limits too. Formal sensory integration therapy is a licensed occupational-therapy speciality, and a licensed occupational therapist can tailor a plan to your own child in a way that no general home program can. Use this while you look for an appointment, or alongside one. If you are in or near

Multan, you can **book a session with our therapists** and bring your Week 1 notes with you.

♥ **Who this program is for**

- ✓ Children who are easily overwhelmed by noise, crowds or bright light
- ✓ A child upset by clothing labels, seams, haircuts, nail cutting or hair washing
- ✓ Children who constantly crash, spin, jump or squeeze into tight spaces
- ✓ A child who chews sleeves, collars, pencils or whatever is within reach
- ✓ Fussy eating that looks like a problem with texture rather than with taste
- ✓ Big meltdowns that seem to come out of busy, noisy or bright places
- ✓ A child who holds it together at school, then falls apart the moment they get home
- ✓ A child who struggles to settle again once they are upset or excited

⚡ **Important – when to get professional help**

This is a supportive home program — it isn't a diagnosis, and it doesn't replace a proper assessment. Please speak to a professional soon if:

Behaviour that puts your child's safety at risk, such as running off or hurting themselves

Extreme distress most days that overwhelms family life

Food refusal so severe it is affecting your child's nutrition or growth

Your child loses skills or withdraws from people they used to enjoy

Sensory struggles that are getting clearly worse over time

Any worry about your child's hearing or eyesight — have those checked first, because they change what the behaviour means

📍 **Getting help where you live**

Everything here is free to use **anywhere in the world**. If you'd like a professional to take a closer look, the best next step is someone local

to you:

Work with us online, from anywhere. We offer **online sessions and parent coaching** worldwide — book an online consultation and we'll guide you and your child directly.

Talk to your child's **doctor, paediatrician, GP or health visitor** — share what you noticed.

Ask about **free early-childhood or early-intervention services** in your area — many countries offer them for young children (e.g. Early Intervention in the US, NHS referrals in the UK).

Search “**child speech & language therapist near me**”, or ask your doctor for a referral.

Near Multan, Pakistan? You're also warmly welcome in person at our centre — **contact us here.**

☆ **Your step-by-step roadmap**

Move at your child's pace, not the calendar's — the “weeks” are just a gentle order, not a race. Feel free to repeat any stage for as long as it's helping.

Week 1 – Notice your child's signals

Learn what winds your child up and what calms them down.

Watch for the moments and places where your child tips over, and jot them down for a week.

Make two short lists: what your child avoids, and what your child cannot get enough of.

Notice what brings them back down — a quiet corner, a firm cuddle, a favourite blanket.

Look for the pile-up: tired plus hungry plus noisy is what usually breaks the day.

 **Try** Look for the small early signs — covering ears, fidgeting, going quiet — **this:** and step in before the meltdown.

Week 2 – Calming heavy work

Use deep, calming input that helps the body feel organised.

Give firm bear hugs and slow, deep squeezes — ask first, and stop the moment they want you to.

Let them push, pull and carry — heavy cushions, a laundry basket, a bag of shopping.

Try animal walks, wall pushes or a “squash” between two soft cushions.

Offer heavy work before a hard moment, not only afterwards — ten minutes is usually enough.

 **Try** This kind of slow, heavy “work” for the muscles is one of the most **this:** reliably calming things you can offer.

Week 3 – Build a calm-down space

Create a safe place where your child can settle themselves.

Set up a cosy corner with cushions, a blanket and dim, soft light.

Add a few soothing items — a soft toy, a favourite book, a fidget.

Practise using it while your child is calm and happy, so it feels familiar when they are not.

Show your child it is a friendly resting place, never a punishment.

 **Try** Offer the calm corner before things boil over, not as a “time out” after — **this:** it is a rest, not a telling-off. A printable calm-down steps card on the wall gives your child something to follow once they are in there.

Week 4 – Ease everyday sensory triggers

Reduce the small daily things that overwhelm your child.

Cut out scratchy labels and offer soft clothing — lay out two choices the night before.

Give warning, and headphones or a quiet exit, before noisy places.

Introduce messy play slowly, letting your child touch new textures with a spoon or brush first.

Change one thing at a time, so you can tell what actually helped.

 **Try** Add ten or fifteen minutes to the morning dressing window. Rushed **this:** dressing is behind a surprising number of meltdowns.

Week 5 – A daily calm routine

Weave small sensory breaks into a predictable day.

Plan short movement or heavy-work breaks before the tricky moments, not after them.

Keep daily routines steady and predictable so there are fewer surprises.

Pack a small sensory kit for your bag — headphones, a chewy snack, a fidget, a familiar cloth.

End the day with a calming wind-down — a bath, deep pressure, quiet time.

 **Try** A predictable rhythm to the day is calming in itself — surprises are what **this:** most often tip children over the edge. Putting that rhythm up as a visual schedule your child can see means they no longer have to remember what comes next.

Week 6 – Take the calm out of the house

Help what works at home hold up in the bazaar, at school and at family gatherings.

Start with short trips at quiet times, and leave while it is still going well.

Give your child a job — carrying the bag or pushing the trolley is heavy work in disguise.

Agree a signal, a word or a hand squeeze, that means “I need to step out”, and always honour it.

Tell one adult at school or in the family what helps, in a single sentence they can remember.

 **Try** Leaving early on a good day teaches your child that these places are **this:** survivable. Staying until it collapses teaches the opposite.

Little tricks that make it work

- ✓ Every child is different — keep what helps yours and drop what does not.
- ✓ Warn your child before you touch them, especially from behind.
- ✓ Give plenty of warning before changes and transitions.
- ✓ Watch the pile-up — tired, hungry and noisy together is what tips most children. If bedtime is the weak link, helping your child sleep better tackles that on its own.
- ✓ Offer calming input regularly through the day, not only after a meltdown.
- ✓ Use fewer words when they are overloaded — a steady voice does more than an explanation.
- ✓ Never force your child into a texture, sound or activity that distresses them.
- ✓ Notice and gently celebrate the moments they cope well.

How you'll know it's working

- Fewer or shorter meltdowns during the day
- Recovery in minutes rather than the rest of the afternoon
- More willingness to try new textures, sounds or places
- Your child starting to ask for, or go and get, what calms them
- One shop, gathering or classroom managed that could not be managed before
- Your child telling you what is bothering them, instead of only showing you



Is this based on real methods? This program draws on the occupational-therapy idea of a personalised “sensory diet” — regular, tailored sensory input spread across the day — rooted in Ayres Sensory Integration. Being straight about it: that is a licensed occupational-therapy approach, and its strongest support is for progress towards a child’s own everyday goals rather than for changing how

sensitive a child is. Nothing here replaces an assessment by a licensed occupational therapist.

✔ **Educational information, not a diagnosis.** Our guidance follows standard, research-based practice (CDC, NHS, ASHA and WHO), is written by our therapy team and **medically reviewed by a GMC-registered doctor**. Every child is different, so we can't promise specific results — always use your own judgement and speak to a qualified professional about your child. **Read our full disclaimer.**

— FAQ

A Calm Body: questions parents ask