SENSORY SWING PLAY MANUAL
11 OF THE BEST SWINGING GAMES AND THERAPY EXERCISES
For most children, flying through the air on a playground, tire, or front porch swing is just about the best entertainment there is.

No doubt about it, swinging is FUN – but swing games are also full of amazing developmental benefits for kids. Movement or **vestibular** input is so very important for developing balance and helping children feel safe and secure as they explore and play. Swinging is a great way to provide this kind of **sensory** input for your child. Check out these unique and beneficial activities for kids – perfect for your new sensory swing!
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1. SUPERMAN

Have the child lay with his stomach on the swing, lifting arms and legs up as high as possible, flying like Superman! As he swings, can he reach to grab a toy or ball from your hand? Can he catch a ball that you toss out in front of him? Can he toss a ball to you or at a target? This is not only a great sensory experience, but awesome for strengthening the shoulders and back!

Note:
Okay, so moms usually steer away from this one because it’s “not how a swing is meant to be used”…but spinning is such a great vestibular experience for kids that we couldn’t resist! Stand close by and help your little one turn his swing around and around a few times, then let that tornado spin!

Note:
Want a new way to swing? Have your little one lie on the swing on her stomach. Holding one end of a jump rope, give her the other end to hold with both hands. Stand a few feet away from the swing and gently pull the rope to get your kiddo swinging!

Then, try holding the rope still and have your little one do the pulling to move her swing! For another fun twist, have your child pull herself hand over hand up the jump rope to reach you. Then have her let go for a fun ride and do it all over again!

Note:
First, help your child build a tall tower a few feet away from his swing using empty cardboard boxes or shoe boxes. Then…well, he’ll know what to do! See if he can get himself swinging high enough to kick the tower down! Have him try it again, this time lying on his stomach and reaching out in front to knock the tower down with his hands!

Note:
5. BREAKING THE RULES (again :)

The playground police will not be happy with us…first spinning on the swing and now standing on it?! Gasp! :) Let your child stand with his feet on the swing holding onto the chains tight with both hands. If the child is older, give him a core strength challenge by encouraging him to get himself swinging independently.

If you have a younger child, give him a soft push and see if he can keep his balance and tolerate the sensory experience of swinging while standing.

Note:
6. HIDE AND SEEK

A twist on a favorite game! Stand in front of your child while they start swinging. Tell them to close their eyes and count to five while they keep swinging. Move to another area (to the right, left, behind, to the side, etc.) When they open their eyes, how fast can they find you? Closing your eyes while moving creates a deep challenge for body awareness and vestibular integration. How fast can they refocus to find you while they keep on swinging?

Note:
7. BLAST OFF!

Let kids pretend to be rockets by pushing off your hands with their feet! Every time they come forward on the swing, have your hands ready and let them give another great big push off with their feet! Don’t be shy to push back a little to help those rockets soar while providing some awesome proprioceptive input!

Note:
8. SHAKE DOWN

No swinging involved for this one, but we will still need that swing. This time your child simply has to HOLD ON! :) Can he keep himself from falling off while mom or dad gives him a little roller coaster ride?

You provide the movement: shake the swing, spin the swing, move the swing side to side, move fast, move slow, move him between two adults forward and backward. Hold him high in the air for a count of 10, then let him go fast! Get him swinging in a circular pattern instead of forward/backward. You be the driver and provide a ride that fits with what the child can tolerate!

Note:
Clap your hands in a unique pattern and have your child repeat the same pattern as they swing and spin. This creates a great challenge for paying attention and vestibular integration. How well can they focus on your clapping rhythm while they keep on swinging?

Note:
10. WHEELBARROW CRAWLS

Lower your swing so that your child can touch the ground while laying on his stomach. Have him crawl around using his hands while his body is suspended in the swing. He can crawl around in circles or try to crawl quickly in one direction so that he swings back and forth using his hands to push off the ground. This one’s a great strength builder while providing tactile input.

Note:
11. FLOPPY FISH

This one always gets laughs. Have your kiddo lay in the swing on her stomach. Then have her create motion by twisting her body left and right like a fish underwater. This is great for vestibular input and helps develop body awareness.

Note: