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## A WARM HUG FOR WINTER

Have you ever encountered the feeling of deep relaxation when someone gives you a big hug? If so, you may enjoy a weighted blanket. They provide deep pressure and proprioceptive input to your body. It is believed that this can cause a shift in the nervous system and induce a feeling of calmness. Weighted blankets have shown positive results for several conditions including sensory processing disorder, ADHD and anxiety. There are no hard and fast rules as to the size and weight however, a rule of thumb is 10% of the persons body weight plus 1-2 pounds. Blankets should not hang over the sides of the bed and are not recommended for children under 3. The weighted blanket should be used with parental supervision.

There are multiple sources for blankets. They can be found in big box retailers and even supermarkets. Please be mindful of the size and weight that is right for you or your child.

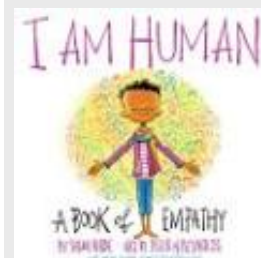
The Pediatric Potentials community can enjoy a 25% discount (code PP25) at the following vendor. <https://magicweightedblanket.com>

Check out Home Depot's fun and skill building wooden craft kits



[Craft Kit link](#)

## Recommended Books



**I Am Books**

by Susan Verde



This series of books includes *I Am Yoga*, *I Am Peace* and *I Am Love*. Now the tiniest yogis can calm their minds and strengthen their bodies by exploring the world of yoga, and other topics. Geared to ages 4-8 years but really for everyone.

[Visit Susan's website](#)

*Please consult with you therapist if you're considering purchasing.*

## If The Shoe Fits

This year, back to school shopping may have looked a bit different, or it may not have happened at all. The therapists at Pediatric Potentials want to remind you to check the fit of your child's shoes.



- While shoes may not look worn because you spent lots more time at home it is recommended that shoes be checked for fit every 1-3 months
- Children's feet grow in spurts, they will most likely need new shoes every 3-6 months
- If you're buying online remember that width is as important as length

- Always measure before buying, and watch for signs of irritation
- Infants don't really need shoes, but in winter months, non-skid socks are the way to go
- You may be inclined to save money by trying to use hand me down shoes, however this can cause gait problems
- If you notice uneven wear of the shoes, it may be an indicator of alignment problems
- Please consult with your Physical Therapist regarding your child's footwear or if you are interested in information regarding orthotics

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## Kids Need To Move

Physical activity is vital for every child's health and quality of life. It is recommended that children ages 6-17 get at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity. When kids don't have appropriate channels to release their energy, it can manifest as irritable, aggressive or attention seeking behaviors. Obstacle courses are a great way to use both the brain and the body. Some fun rules and ideas to help you get started are:

- Construction can be part of the fun so get them involved
- Watch Ninja Warrior for inspiration
- Come up with a list of challenges (e.g. balance & strength) and create the course based on those challenges
- Consider stacking couch cushions or pillows, lining up baskets or boxes & sorting balls
- Add the element of imaginative play to the course
- Think safety first
- Make challenges realistic





Other materials and ideas you can use:

- 2X4 wood plank as balance beam
- Pop up tunnels or create you own by using cushions or taped yoga mats
- Painters tape to create spider web mazes or walking paths
- Pillow case sack races
- Throw a beanbag into a laundry basket
- Add some mental challenges such as letter sequences, matching games, math equations
- Use a kitchen timer

Setting up an indoor or outdoor obstacle course is easy. Amazon carries the [Pretext 3 in 1 carnival outdoor combo set](#) which includes cones, rings and beanbags.

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## The Art of Playing Board Games: Is It a Lost Skill?

It's time to revisit the value and purpose of board games (and what better time than daylight savings time, with those dark late afternoons). "The swipe" has replaced turn taking, engagement, winning, losing, counting spaces, rolling dice, spinning spinners, learning new rules, and playing by those rules. Even cleaning up puzzle pieces, replacing the lid on the box, putting things back and remembering how to play for next time are lost skills. Family time now is often a side-by-side digital experience.

Let's revisit the board game as a wonderful family activity and reap the benefits

Board Games Help Teach Vital Social Skills: Competition and motivation

encourage verbal expression while developing qualities like patience and determination. Concentration and memory are improved by focusing on the rules and next steps of the game.

Kids Feel Motivated by Playing Board Games: Kid's are encouraged to try hard to win and this builds self-esteem.

Great Family Time: This is one of the greatest benefits of board games. Multi-generational family members can gather together around a game in a positive and fun way.

Kids Learn Decision Making Skills: Strategy based board games require a player to make quick but effective moves. A player has to think critically on a very high level, rather than just making a move randomly.

Teach How to Achieve Goals: Kids learn how to recruit allies, when to make a move and how to predict opponent's strategies. This provides a framework to help them accomplish their goals.



Family game night fits in perfectly with this time of upcoming holiday gift buying and time spent together. These are games we can recommend for all age groups, starting as young as 3 years of age.

### Recommended Games

Carcassone

Catan

Colorama\*

Connect 4

Dominion

Feed the Wozzle\*

Frog Party\*

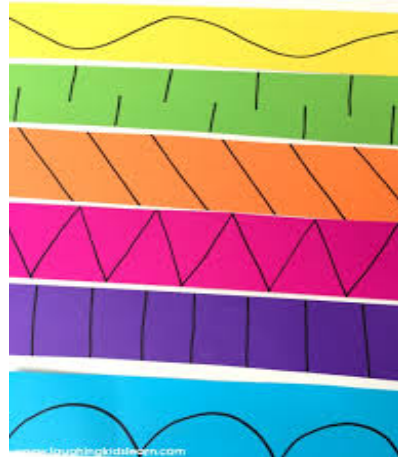
Mouse Trap

Race to the Treasure\*

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## Technology Hampering Your Child's Fine Motor Development? Try These Fun Activities to Build Finger Muscles and Coordination Skills

- Paper Tearing: Give students 1"-2" strips of construction paper to rip. Using strips instead of a whole sheet of paper reinforces the use of the pincer grasp and works the muscles more effectively.

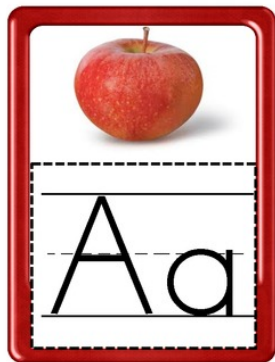


- Cutting Activities: Cut apart images of school supplies. Glue them onto an image of a backpack on construction paper.
- Trace and Punch Cards: Use a single hole punch to punch out letters of image on cards. Print on colored construction paper for more fun.



- Plastic Links: Use vibrant colored links to make chains or designs.
- Pre-Writing Cards: Encourage child to imitate the lines and shapes on each card. Trace directly on the card, on a chalkboard or sand tray. Laminate for reuse.
- Stickers: Get a variety of fun and colorful stickers. Your child can trace a picture by placing stickers along the outline of the image.






- Tweezing or Scooping: This is a color sorting activity and you can use pom-pom balls, linking cubes, or any colorful object.

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