**What is heavy work?**

* Heavy work means moving your body against resistance which activates *proprioceptive receptors* in your muscles, tendons or joints

**Why is heavy work important?**

* This system helps us understand where our body is in space (e.g. tying shoes without looking)
* It also tells us how much force we are using and whether we need to use more or less force in order to successfully complete a task (e.g. when colouring, cutting our food or opening/closing a door)

  

**How does heavy work help students?**

* The resistive input obtained through heavy work activities generally has a calming or organizing effect
* It allows children to improve their arousal level to a state where they can pay attention and learn
* Proprioceptive input also helps to improve body awareness which helps with overall coordination

**How to incorporate heavy work into the classroom?**

* The best activities are the ones that can be easily incorporated into daily routines and are enjoyed by the students; try a few of the following and see what works best:
1. **Pushing/Pulling Activities:**
	* Pushing a cart down the hall (weighted with book, recycling, snacks etc)
	* Singing “row, row, row your boat” with a partner by sitting on the floor, holding hands, pushing and pulling each other
	* Try to stand up with a partner by sitting back to back, interlocking arms, placing feet flat on the floor and pushing against each other into standing
	* Doing full or knee push-ups or wall push-ups or crawling activities
	* Pulling friends outside in a wagon or sled
	* Playing in a hands-and-knee position or lying on tummy while reading or doing homework
	* Pushing and holding open heavy doors

   

1. **Squeezing:**
	* Playing with resistive putty or play-doh while incorporating tools such as scissors, rolling pins, cookie cutters and stamps
	* Cutting out items from thick cardstock paper
2. **Lifting/Carrying:**
	* Lifting or taking down chairs
	* Helping to rearrange desks in the classroom
	* Erasing chalk or dry erase board
	* Carrying bins full of recycling or books
	* Helping around the school, carrying and stacking books, printer paper or supplies
	* Carrying a heavy backpack (wearing one even when not needed)
	* Setting up/ putting away gym supplies ex. hanging mats on the wall, lifting balls into storage bins, hanging rings over post, etc.

   

1. **Climbing:**
	* Most easily done at a play structure with ladders, rock wall and monkey bars or climbing area
	* Going up and down stairs
2. **Jumping/Running:**
	* Play jumping games like hopscotch or jump rope
	* Sitting and bouncing on a hippity hop ball
	* Jumping in and out of hoops or hopping on one foot
	* Galloping or skipping in gym
	* Most sports (e.g. soccer, basketball, flag football, gymnastics, ball hockey, volleyball, etc)
3. **Chewing/Sucking/Blowing:**
	* Allow gum chewing
	* Provide chewy snacks/candy for rewards (licorice, fruit roll-ups, tootsie rolls, starburst)
	* Offer crunchy foods for class snacks (carrots, celery, apples, pears, pretzels, popcorn)