

# A Sensory Life

## **Sensory Tips for Standing and Walking in Line at School**

- For a child who struggles with tactile defensiveness (does not like being touched or bumped), have the child stand at the front or back of the line. This will decrease the chances of being bumped by 50%!
- Prior to having the class stand in line, engage in a movement break or heavy/hard work break...such as stretching, jumping jacks, jumping or hopping, wall push-ups or chair push-ups, etc.
- For the younger children, right before leaving the classroom while standing in line...sing a fun song where clapping, stomping, dancing, etc is involved to help get the wiggles out. This will provide a nice dose of sensory input prior to the walk down the hall. Try to keep the song and movements the same each day, so this can be a familiar routine for the children and to promote self-regulation.
- While walking and standing in line encourage deep breathing, having the teacher lead the activity.
- Since it is typically required for children to be kept quiet while walking in line, refrain from having the children keep their mouths closed (such as “zipping the lips closed” or “puffing out the cheeks”) as this hinders normalized and healthy breathing patterns. This in turn can back fire on the nervous system and self-regulation. This is also especially difficult for children who struggle with motor planning and body awareness...asking the child to zip or puff the cheeks could result in lack of gross motor coordination and falling or tripping while walking.
- Allow for natural/organic chewing gum or other oral sensory tools during time spent in line.
- Allow for the use of fidget tools or a handheld vibrating gadget while walking and standing in line.
- Refrain from having children walk with hands behind their backs, crossing over in front of them, or in their pockets. This can create a true balance and motor planning issue for some children, which in turn will cause more loss of balance and more bumping in to one another.
- Do not rush the children in to line, as this will create a sense of dysregulation and sensory overload for many children. It is so important to manage your time wisely so these sensory techniques can be put in place prior to standing and walking in line.

