

## Weighted Vests

Weighted vests are used by school-based occupational therapists for students who exhibit signs and symptoms of attention deficits or sensory modulation difficulties. Recent studies have shown that the use of weighted vests in the classroom can be helpful in decreasing purposeless activity and increasing on task behavior. The deep pressure provided by the vest is known to have a calming effect on the nervous system. This effect is the same as can be observed in newborn babies who are calmed by being swaddled in a blanket. Some children's systems are easily over stimulated and require intervention in order to promote optimal performance in the classroom.

### Guidelines for use of weighted vests in the classroom:

- It is recommended that teachers get parental consent before using the weighted vest on a student.
- The amount of weight that will be needed to produce optimal performance will vary from student to student and will probably be based on trial and error. Weights should be distributed as evenly.
- Studies have shown that weights equaling approximately 5% of the student's total body weight will produce desired effect. **Weights should never exceed 20 % of students total body weight. Please refer to weight chart to determine how much weight to use.**
- It is recommended that the vest be worn for no longer than 15-20 minutes at a time in a one-hour period. The nervous system will adjust to the wearing of the vest and will lose the desired effect if worn for longer periods.
- The vest should be placed on the child 5-10 minutes prior to the start of the intended activity. For example, if the student has particular difficulty during reading time he should put the vest on before the reading session begins and should remove it after 15-20 minutes of wear time, whether or not the activity is completed. The calming effects should be sustained for some time after the removal of the vest. The vest is worn again after an hour or so for another activity that requires attention to task.
- Never, use the vest as a punishment or have the child think they are bad and that is why they need the vest. Always present the vest in a positive manner and tell the students that you are trying something new and want their opinion of how well it works in helping them get their work done. It may be helpful to engage other children, who might not necessary require the vest, to try it for a while so that the intended student does not feel singled out.

**\* IF THERE ARE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS PLEASE CONTACT THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST**

**Weight Chart**

Weight of child	5% Optimal Weight	Number of 6 oz. weights to use in vest
40	2.00 #	5-6
45	2.25 #	6
50	2.50 #	6-7
55	2.75 #	7-8
60	3.00 #	8
65	3.25 #	8-9
70	3.50 #	9-10
75	3.75 #	10