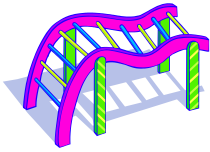


## Vestibular-Proprioceptive (Body and space awareness)

### Activities for Pre-Schoolers



#### What is Vestibular-Proprioceptive Input?

Vestibular-Proprioception are the two senses related to movement, position, and body awareness. It helps create a sense of balance and spatial awareness to understand the position of our own body parts, and our body in a space awareness.

Receptors for the proprioceptive system are mainly found in our muscles, they help us know where our joints are positioned, and where we are in relation to others and objects. It also helps us to know how much force we may need to use for different activities. Receptors for the vestibular system are found in the inner ear. They help us keep our head upright and our eyes steady as we move.

#### Why do we need Vestibular-Proprioceptive Input?

We need a vestibular-proprioreceptive system to be able to plan and coordinate our body parts and actions. It also has a calming effect on the body when activated.

#### How can I Help?

Incorporate “heavy work” activities throughout the day in a structured and fun way.

These can be as simple as:

- Climbing on playground equipment, trees, a rope ladder, a rock wall, tables and chairs, soft play areas, when fishing in the rock pools, or during treasure hunts in the garden or woods.
- Hanging and swinging from pull-up bars, climbing frames and monkey bars.
- Jumping games, for example, hopping, hopscotch and skipping rope and jumping on a trampoline (up /down, left/right, or forwards/backwards vs going around and around that may become dysregulating).
- Ride a scooter, bicycle or balance bike or try roller skates or a skateboard.
- Jump or climb in and out of inner tubes (available at auto yards).
- Swinging from a trapeze, Tarzan, or button swing.

Contact the Paediatric Occupational Therapy Department on **01481 223801** if you need further details or have any questions.

- Play in heavy wet sand in the garden or on the beach.
- Painting or chalk drawing, for example, of racetracks, rainbows, volcanoes etc. on large sheets of paper on the floor or against a wall.
- Use cardboard boxes with blankets and pillows to build forts.
- Play racing cars with friends by pushing each other around in cardboard boxes.
- Pull another child on a blanket on the floor.
- Bounce on a space-hopper ball.
- Give and get big bear hugs.
- Pillow fights (with soft pillows. Keep an eye on this fun game so that it doesn't get out of hand).
- Wheelbarrow walking (supported by a grown-up by holding the child's legs as they walk on their hands).
- Simon Says, Musical Chairs or Row Row Row your Boat.
- Participation in activities such as horse riding, karate, gymnastics, and swimming.

### **Next Step**

Consider activities that can be easily done around the house in a normal daily routine such as:

- Push or pull boxes with toys or a few books in it (more resistance is provided if boxes are pushed/pulled across a carpeted floor).
- Encourage your child to find and fill the shopping cart as you call out the list or allow your child to push the shopping cart.
- Help rearrange bedroom furniture or help set up the patio equipment etc.
- Arrange the picnic blanket and heavy garden cushions on the lawn.
- Play pillow fights, (gentle) rough and tumble, balloon tennis or do chair-“push-ups” before dinner, homework, and bath time.

### **Transitions**

There are some activities that can be included preparing for transitions or between different venues and appointments:

- Roll, walk, or run up a hill/incline.
- Open and close the door for other people.
- Wheelbarrow walks (support from an adult close to the hips to provide more stability).
- Wear a heavy backpack (filled with, for example, a water bottle, lunch/snack, change of clothing, a suitable toy).
- Do various animal walks (crab walk, bear walk, leopard crawl).
- Follow my leader with various jumping, skipping, and hopping patterns.

Contact the Paediatric Occupational Therapy Department on **01481 223801** if you need further details or have any questions.

## **Household Chores Activities**

Involve your child in day-to-day chores and activities when appropriate and under supervision:

- Take cushions off the sofa, help parents vacuum under them and then put them back: can also climb on them and “crash” into them.
- Vacuum, sweep, mop, dust.
- Help empty the rubbish bins/wastepaper baskets.
- Carry the filled black binbags to the wheelie bin and push wheelie bin to the curb.
- Help carry the laundry basket; unpack the washing machine and hang clothing on the washing line/put into the tumble drier.
- Help unpack groceries, for example, the bag of sugar, butter, and tins (mind toes!).
- Load the dishwasher, washing machine.
- Wipe the dinner table after meals.
- Water the flowerbeds with a watering can.
- Help change the bed sheets or replace the pillow cover.
- Help wash the car.
- Help rake leaves in the garden, digging to plant flowers, push the wheelbarrow.

## **In between Mealtimes**

- Chew chewy snacks that provide resistance, for example, fruit leathers, bagels, or biltong/beef jerky.
- Oral motor activities (activities using the mouth), for example, whistles, blowing bubbles, using blow brush pens or party gazoos.
- Drink thick liquids (smoothies) through a straw. The thickness of the straw and the thickness of the liquid can be varied to change the degree of effort involved.
- Using novel straws can be motivating.