

Introduction

One of our sensory systems called the vestibular system provides information regarding movement, gravity and head positions. It tells us if we moving, how fast and in what direction.

Some children have a more sensitive vestibular system than others and this can cause insecurity in changing position and when moving. This causes feelings of dizziness and nausea with lots of movement. These children may hide and avoid climbing and other gross motor activities. They may enjoy and be more advanced doing fine motor activities.

Other children struggle to process the information from the vestibular system about movement and balance. They can be constantly on the move and may not be aware of safety: rarely experiencing fear or anxiety when climbing or moving around the environment. They appear to be constantly on the move; seeking movement. These children will seek out gross motor activities climbing and may appear impulsive. They may present as fidgety and restless.

Similar activities will have different effect on the children depending on their needs.

Activities for the child who is over responsive to movement (avoiding movement)

Activities should be graded from those which are less challenging to those that are challenging.

It is important to be sensitive to the movement needs of the child. The child should always be able to put a foot or hand on the ground if the movement is being controlled by some one else. When considering activities introduce slowly and at the child's pace. Do not force the child to do anything they don't want to do, work within their tolerance.

- Obstacle courses (indoor and outdoor)
- Play ground equipment including swings and slides
- Rough and tumble play
- Slow rocking movement
- Action songs
- Soft play areas
- Wobble board
- Therapy ball - child lies over ball and pushes /pulls against adult's hands.
- Rock child back and forward on a therapy ball whilst they are lying over the ball.
- Controlled movement on see-saws or equipment with wheels

Strategies

- Use a calm encouraging voice whilst introducing a new activity.
- Encourage the child to watch other children doing the activity first and then

- Change work positions during play e.g. sitting to lying on tummy, side lying.
- Get used to movement up/down, side to side then gradually increase speed and size of movement.
- Children who avoid movement may struggle with unexpected changes in activities and may become very rigid in the way they play or interact; as they may not be able to process unexpected sensory experiences. They often will want to take a lead in play to ensure they can manage the situation.

Activities for the child who is seeking movement and is keen to be "on the go" all the time.

- While swinging: child can play target games, adults working with the child can introduce challenges to the activity.
- Using a hammock the child swings self touching the ground.
- Ensure a highly active child has support to develop experiment in play rather than randomly using equipment.
- Encourage activities that require balance.
- Encourage rolling, somersaults.
- Use trampoline, exercises jump, knee sit and turning.
- Snake: child jumps over wiggling rope.

watch the adult doing it. Talk them through the activity.

Environmental Considerations/Strategies:

- Reduce the level of noise in and around the classroom e.g. place materials/toys that make loud, unpredictable noise away from the child's work/play area.
- Allow the child to have control of the sound source when loud toys/instruments are used e.g. allow the child to blow the whistle or press the play button on the stereo.
- Limit, forewarn or prepare the child for loud noises where possible e.g. fire alarm test
- Allow the child to wear unplugged headphones or "ear defenders" to limit classroom noise.
- Have access to a "den" or "quiet" area. If the child appears overwhelmed allow the child to sit in a quiet corner to calm down and reorganise. Try furnishing this with a pop-up tent and beanbag so the child can feel secure and contained.
- Use a soft voice and slow down your movements and speech if the child has become stressed.
- Play soft music with a slow rhythm during noisy class based activities to help the

Frequency of activities

Complete at least a 10 – 15 minute session 3 times a week. Always monitor the motivation and interest levels of the child and adjust accordingly.

Complete activities from this sheet regularly for at least 3 months

Improving our service

We continue to review our service to make sure that it meets the needs of those who are using it. We would appreciate any suggestions on how we may improve and also comments on what was good about the service.

If you have any compliments, suggestions or complaints, please write to or contact any member of staff in the first instance, or to the Occupational Therapy Service Lead if necessary.

Contact details: see part 1 of pack



USING MY SENSES MANAGING NOISE

Early Years Activity Sheet

**PAEDIATRIC OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY SERVICES**