

A1 - Using my sense of movement

The **vestibular** sensory system is the sense of **movement** information from your body that tells you where your body is in relation to gravity (the position of the body and head, whether you are upright or laying down, etc). It gives security in movement for balance, co-ordination, muscle tone and posture, and tells you if you are moving, how fast and in what direction. The receptors for the vestibular sense are located in the inner ear and are stimulated by movement.

Everyone has a different threshold to sensory input. Some people have a more sensitive vestibular system, which can cause insecurity in changing positions and may feel dizzy or nauseous when moving. This may result with them preferring to stay still, hide and avoid climbing or other gross motor activities and can impact on a child's exploration or ability to function in a busy environment. They may prefer fine motor activities and have greater achievement in hand skills.

Some children may be sensation seeking, repeatedly bouncing up and down, constantly moving, can't sit still at desk or carpet time, spins around or rocking patterns may predominate.

Adult support will be required to provide more appropriate or additional movement, before the child is expected to sit and attend to more structured activities, to assist with increasing tolerances and acceptance of unfamiliar or new activities for sensory skill development, to facilitate activities, which integrate many tactile, vestibular and proprioceptive sensations.

Activities for all children

Introduce the activities at a graded level, within the child's individual level of tolerance and achievement.

- obstacle courses (indoors and outdoors)
- playground equipment
- soft play or multi-sensory rooms
- rough and tumble play
- slow rocking movements
- action songs
- hide and seek games

Adapt the activities to suit: eg Hide and Seek using favoured objects in brown paper bags, behind books, under scarves or in stack tins or boxes and encourage them to find. Provide additional support when completing climbing activities.

Multisensory methods: support learning with use of rhythm, rhyme, singing, clapping, tapping, drumming, shakers or soft calming background music.

Provide physical reassuring feedback: eg come close to obtain visual contact, and use touch contact (hug affects) to help prolong attention to task.

Frequency of activity use: Complete 10-15 minutes sessions every day or at least three times a week.

Monitor the child's level of response (interest and motivation): in the task and adjust accordingly (to simplify or increase) to obtain the 'just right fit' to challenge their sensory system.