

# BODY AWARENESS

The following information and activity suggestions are designed to promote the understanding of a child with poor body awareness and its associated difficulties and provide guidance and suggestions of therapeutic activities to develop more mature body awareness.

## Introduction:

Awareness of one's body comes from sensations from the receptors in the muscles, joints and skin. Receptors located in the muscles and joints tell the brain when and how the joints are contracting or stretching and when and how the joints are bending, extending or being pulled and compressed. The skin receptors help to build a map of the body. This information enables the brain to know where each part of the body is and how it is moving through space without having to look.

## **Difficulties may lead to:**

- Poor spatial judgement, bump into things
- Difficulty dressing, washing properly etc.
- Need visual assistance to move body parts e.g. putting arm in sleeve of coat
- Difficulty coordinating gross and fine motor movements
- Handwriting may be poor
- Limited scissor control
- May be fidgety
- Difficulties with motor planning and visual perception

## **Activity ideas to promote body awareness:**

- Finish an incomplete figure of a man
- Use body or face puzzles to reinforce the body concept

- Child lies relaxed on their back and closes their eyes. When the adult names a body part, the child moves the body part gently
- Outline the child's body on a large sheet of paper. Have the child fill in the details of their various body parts.
- Make a 'sandwich' out of your child between the couch cushions or pillows. Gently add pressure as you pretend to put on pickles, cheese etc.
- The child wears a light wrist or ankle weight while performing activities.
- Rub the child's arms and legs with different textured materials, naming the body parts as you do so.
- Choose family activities that involve appropriate kinds of movement such as walking, swimming, hiking, horse-riding, playing tennis etc.
- Play games involving 'heavy muscle work' such as tug of war, wheelbarrow walks, swinging, playground equipment etc.
- Can the child help with 'heavy work' chores such as carrying the groceries, the washing basket or making their bed
- Have the child close their eyes and 'feel' where their legs, hands, arms etc. are. Ask if they are up or down. See if the child can get into different positions without looking such as roll into a ball, touch their nose, make a circle with their arms, make an 'X' with their arms and legs

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