

## Body Awareness

**Did you know...** Our muscles, joints and tendons help tell us what position our body is in. This is called body awareness.

Most children develop the ability to integrate information about their body through everyday activities. An awareness of one's body comes from sensation from muscles and joints, and touch sensation from the skin receptors. This information enables the brain to know where each body part is and how it is moving through space without looking.

Body awareness gives smooth and coordinated movements to a child's actions. It enables a child to know how hard and fast to throw a ball to a friend playing catch. It is needed so that a child can feel the desk and chair and know where and how to sit in it. Body awareness enables a child's hands to feel and know how to hold a pencil.

### Activities to support Body Awareness

**Activities that involve jumping, bouncing, crawling, balancing and negotiating different spaces using different actions, all help to feed into our body awareness. Below are just a few examples of what to do to further develop this with your child.**

- **Obstacle course:** Using different objects around the school/home e.g. Chair, table build an obstacle course. Then encourage your child to watch and then follow you around the course.

*Extra challenge:* Give verbal instructions such as "crawl under the table and then hop to the bedroom". Reinforce concepts for example through, front, back, middle, under, over, behind, above etc.

- **Animal walks:** Explore how your body moves – quickly, slowly jerkily. Move like an animal – fast, slow, high, and low. Move sideways like a crab, forwards like a crab, forwards like a rabbit etc.

- **Twister:** Commercially available from most toys shops this can also be made by placing rows of different coloured circles on the floor. Make up some instructions cards say things like place left foot on green circle, then right hand on blue circle etc.

- **Hide and seek:** Encourage your child to hide his body in something. This helps to reinforce his body space.

- **Pouring:** Pouring water (or rice, dried peas) from one container to another. Start with one container on surface and pour into it, then to progress to child holding both containers and pouring.

**Choose family activities that involve appropriate kinds of movement. Children often find doing something with the family more appealing that doing it alone and the whole family may discover new, healthy activities. Walking, swimming, hiking, horseback riding, playing tennis or cricket are all enjoyable family activities.**

