



# Body Awareness Activities

Body Awareness is the ability to know your body's shape, size, length, and the position that it is in at any given time. This awareness is automatic and is developed from information received by the muscles and joints.

A child with good body awareness knows whether or not he will fit into a given space, knows if he can reach an object or needs to move closer, knows if he can pass objects without knocking them, etc

A child with poor body awareness does not have this automatic knowledge. He may tend to bump into things, knock things over, appear hesitant in movements and may need to visually check that his body is in the position he intended it to be in.

Some children with poor body awareness may be unable to name various body parts while others can name them as a result of rote learning.

The following activities have been designed to help improve your child's awareness. Activities that include touch (tactile stimulation) and movement (vestibular stimulation) are very effective ways of helping to improve body awareness:

## 1a Child lies on his back on the floor.

He may be on top of a large piece of paper or directly on a surface that you can draw on (eg. Concrete, lino). Draw around his body, telling him where you are drawing as you go, so that you end up with his outline.

Eg. "I'm drawing around your left leg now; I'm going down to your foot and I'm at your foot" or

## 1b The child can draw around his own hands and feet with a thick texta onto paper.

When you have finished drawing, sit with the child to observe and discuss the drawing, identify length, position and shape of body parts etc. If your child cannot name each part, you can also practise naming.

## 2 Obstacle course

Make an obstacle course for the child which includes lots of challenges. He may walk, crawl, jump, hop etc to complete the course. You can let him decide how he will complete the course or you can direct how he will do it. You may even like to take it in turns.

Examples of challenges may include:

- crawling under a chair
- climbing onto a chair and jumping off
- crawling/walking over a pile of cushions or large bean bag
- walking/jumping through the rungs of a ladder
- jumping over a rope
- crawling/jumping through tyre inner tubes
- rolling along a straight line
- crawling through a barrel or open carton
- tossing small bean bags/soft toys into a bucket
- walking along a plank of wood

If you do not have the room in your house or yard to

set up such a game, you could try taking your child to a park or finding a playground that already has some obstacle equipment to use.

## 3 Use of a mirror:

Practise moving into and out of different positions in front of a mirror, eg. By playing "Simon says" Help the child identify and touch body parts while facing a full length mirror

## 4 Body Puzzles

You can practise completing jigsaw puzzles that comprise body parts (commercially available). Make your own jigsaw puzzles by cutting up pictures of people from magazines. Draw partial people and have the child draw in the missing parts

## 5 Tactile Activities - see handout

## 6 Simon Says - this game is also good for developing listening skills

## 7 Statues - the child or children dance to music. When the music stops they have to "freeze" in whatever position they are in. The first to move is out.

## 8 Dancing: The child dances or does animal walks to different kinds of music.

## 9 Twister: You can use the commercially available game or make your own using a large sheet of paper and paints

## 10 Follow the leader