



Motor Planning and Sequencing

Before movement can be planned and executed effectively, children need to have a well-developed sense of their own body in their minds. The following activities provide sensory experiences, which together with the child's focus on the parts of the body where the sensation is directed will reinforce the child's internal image of his/her body.

It is therefore, important to talk to the child about their bodies and how the sensation feels, to help the child focus on that body part. For example, if you are exploring a number of different materials with the child, you need to ask the child how each feels and whether it feels the same when a material is rubbed on the outside of the hand, as on the palm of the hand. Discuss whether it feels e.g. hard, soft, silky, rough, ticklish, nice, not nice, scratchy, fluffy, cold. The child may well experience the material differently to an adult, and this must be accepted – don't argue about how something feels, although you can say that it feels different to you. Keep reinforcing the name of the body part, or the difference between body parts, e.g. comparing the sensation on hand, forearm and upper arm.

Exploring sensations. A good way of doing this is in the bath. Collect a variety of sponges, flannels, brushes (nail brushes, cellulite brushes, exfoliators). Use them when washing and repeat the name of the body part and ask the child how each feels. It can also be done using different pieces of materials and brushes (paint brushes, tooth brushes, hairbrushes). Talcum powder can be used to put on the body part, and then it is brushed or rubbed off.

Animal movements. Discuss with the child how a particular animal sits and walks around. Talk about the arms and legs, and see if the child can pretend to be the animal.

If the child is having difficulty, try in front of a mirror, and talk about what is different about the child's position e.g. your legs are bent at here (touch knees firmly) but a cat walks with straight legs on its feet (straighten legs and place feet on the floor). Some examples of animals are ducks, frogs, bunnies, elephants, lions, chickens.

Obstacle course. An obstacle course made of pieces of furniture or large toys can help the child understand movement in space. Arrange a few objects e.g. a table, chairs together making a tunnel, a mattress, tent, pop-up tunnel, trampoline, rope, boxes, hula hoops. Start with one object initially and see if the child can go under it. Then try over, around, inside etc. Also see if the child can go under, but with arms first, or legs first (crawling backwards), sideways, feet first (crouched) etc. Again, talk about the body parts, and if the child still struggles to change a position you may need to physically correct the position, touching them firmly.

With practise you can build up to an obstacle course with a number of pieces of equipment.

Copying Body Postures. This can be done by choosing simple positions that the child can copy e.g. playing 'Simon Says'.

The child could also copy a teddy bear or toys with joints that an adult manipulates into positions.

The child could also try manipulating the toy into positions to copy the adult, or copy the adult's toy.

As before, it is important to talk about the positions of the joints and limbs, and the child may need to be physically helped into the positions at first.

Hokey Cokey

1. All the children stand in a row with the leader opposite the group
2. The key to practising sequencing in this activity is to announce the order that the body parts are going to be sung in before commencing the song

Then proceed to sing the 'Hokey Cokey' identifying the left and right body parts when required

My Name Is...?

Resources: A large soft ball

1. All stand in a circle and pass the ball round saying your own name when you have the ball
2. Then when it is back to the leader the leader says a name; that child steps forward, the leader throws the ball to that child, who says their name then throws it back to the leader
3. Continue until all the children have been in the circle
4. When all the children know each others' names, build up a sequence of 2 names; those children step forward one behind the next in order as before, and throw the ball back to the leader

Build up the sequence of names so that the children have to remember where they are in the sequence to form a line in the correct order

Clap Hands

1. All stand in a circle with the leader as part of the group
2. The leader starts off a sequence, e.g. one clap
3. The next in line copies it and the next child continuing around the circle back to the leader who adds another e.g. clap, click

fingers.

Build up this sequence of claps and clicks with variations in beat and rhythm.

Fruit Salad

1. Stand in a circle leaving an 'entrance gap'
2. The leader goes round the circle giving each person the name of a fruit, e.g. apple, pear, banana.
3. Then the leader calls out one fruit name; this child walks round the outside of the circle, through the 'entrance gap' of the middle of the circle.

Once the children can do this, the leader calls out a sequence of 2 fruit- they walk round the outside then have to put themselves in a line in order of the calling when they are in the centre – this becomes harder once the sequences has built up!

The Bean Game

1. All stand in a row with the leader opposite facing the children
2. The leader says a bean name and they have to do an appropriate movement.
3. Green beans- star jumps; Butter beans- spin on bottom of feet; Broad beans- stand wide; String beans- stand tall; Chilli beans- shiver and rub arms; Baked beans- crouched in kneeling; Kidney beans- lie on back curled up; Jumping beans- jumps up and down; Runner beans- running on the spot; Jelly beans- shake and wobble; French beans- ooh la la!; Frozen beans- freeze.

The leader calls out a sequence of beans for the children to do the action for.

Finger Rhythm

Resources: Tables and chairs

Leader taps out a finger or hand rhythm on the tabletop for the children to copy (hands should tap the table with flat hands)

Traffic Lights

Resources: Direction cards or road signs

1. Make a circle with the police officer (leader) in the middle who is directing traffic
2. The officer shows a direction card/ road sign and the children complete the appropriate action going round in a circle if they don't want to break the law!
3. Instructions: go fast, go slow, stop, take small steps, take large steps, go left, go right, go backwards, go fast, turn, hop.
4. Build these up so that the police officer shows 2 cards/ road signs, then puts them face down so no-one can see them and the children do the instructions that they have remembered

Build up as many actions as possible- to co-ordinate everyone the police officer could shout 'Change!' for the next action.

Mosaic

Resources: Large picture grids, empty picture grids, mosaic tiles

Give each child an unmarked picture grid and the design to copy as well as mosaic tiles to make their own copy of the mosaic

Snakes

Resources: Beads and laces with picture cards showing a variety of bead patterns

Give each child a lace and beads so that they can replicate the bead patterns from the picture cards.