

A Developmental Movement Play Guide

How children build body awareness and how to support them

Think sensation ...

Jabadao

There are two aspects of physical development that create confident bodies - motor skill and body awareness

We are very used to supporting children to develop motor skills.

Are we as good at supporting them to build body awareness?

Use this guide to

1



2



3



Understand what kind of movement play builds body awareness

Notice how children are already trying to get what they need (whether we support them or not!)

Value and support this important developmental play more



The movement play that builds body awareness

Body awareness comes from many body signals - experienced as sensations - which constantly flood our bodies. An important part of early physical development is learning to notice and process these sensations. It takes time and work.

Sensation-rich movement play is that work.

Babies and children need lots of it until they have built a comfortable, reliable and consistent feeling of me -which they can maintain in movement or stillness.

**Babies
and children
often move in
order to
create sensation
in their bodies**



Sensation-rich movement is ...

Movement that creates lots of useful sensation in the body

- Wiggles, jiggles, fiddles and fidgets
- Sliding, slithering and rolling
- Leaning against your neighbour or the wall
- Pushing, pulling, tussling games
- Stretching and hanging off anything - including an adult body
- Lying and lolling on the floor or the sofa or someone else's body
- Stroking and asking for strokes or cuddles
- Rocking, tilting, tipping, spinning swinging and going upside down
- Big, whole-bodied movement - running, jumping, bouncing, squashing and more
- And creative improvisations that contain combinations of these



It's often movement that we think of as unhelpful, a distraction, or even regression, because it is all about the sensation rather than practising a motor skill

2 See more of this aspect of physical development

Your children will be finding ways to build the body awareness they need - especially the ones who still have a way to go. Observations in these four areas will tell you where and how they are doing this and who needs most work.

Movement

Think sensation, not action and see how your children are putting in the work to build a consistent sense of body and self. Look for movement that creates lots of sensation in the body

Environment

Where is this kind of movement happening? Look inside and outside and especially at places and times where you don't expect to see movement and where children don't think they are being watched

Resources

What invites, prompts or supports sensation-rich movement in your setting? This includes other children's, and adult, bodies, (which are often the best resources for movement play) as well as objects and equipment

Frequency

Notice the places and resources that prompt or invite a lot this kind of play. And especially notice children who seek lots of it. They may be telling you that they are working hard on this aspect of their development.

2 Examples from recent observations

Movement

Lying/lolling on the floor.
Wriggling. Lying with feet
against the wall and pushing

Tussling on the floor

Lying down with each other;
draping legs over each other

Rolling

Leaning against, and fiddling
with, neighbours. Wriggling and
constant motion. Lying down

Environment

In the reading area

Space between shelves

Carpet Area

Area in front of the pegs

Story Circle Time

Resources

Rug and cushions
invite this play

Using each others bodies for
push, pull play

Other bodies. Softer
floor covering

Space is kept clear so
more empty floor
space than anywhere
else inside

Proximity of other children -
who don't always want to be
leant on

Frequency

Several children frequently
use the reading area in this
way

These three do this several
times a day inside and out

Tends to be the girls who
come here - one boy quite
often

Hadn't noticed this before.
happening quite a lot

A few children -
always. Others never.

3 Support more sensation-rich movement play

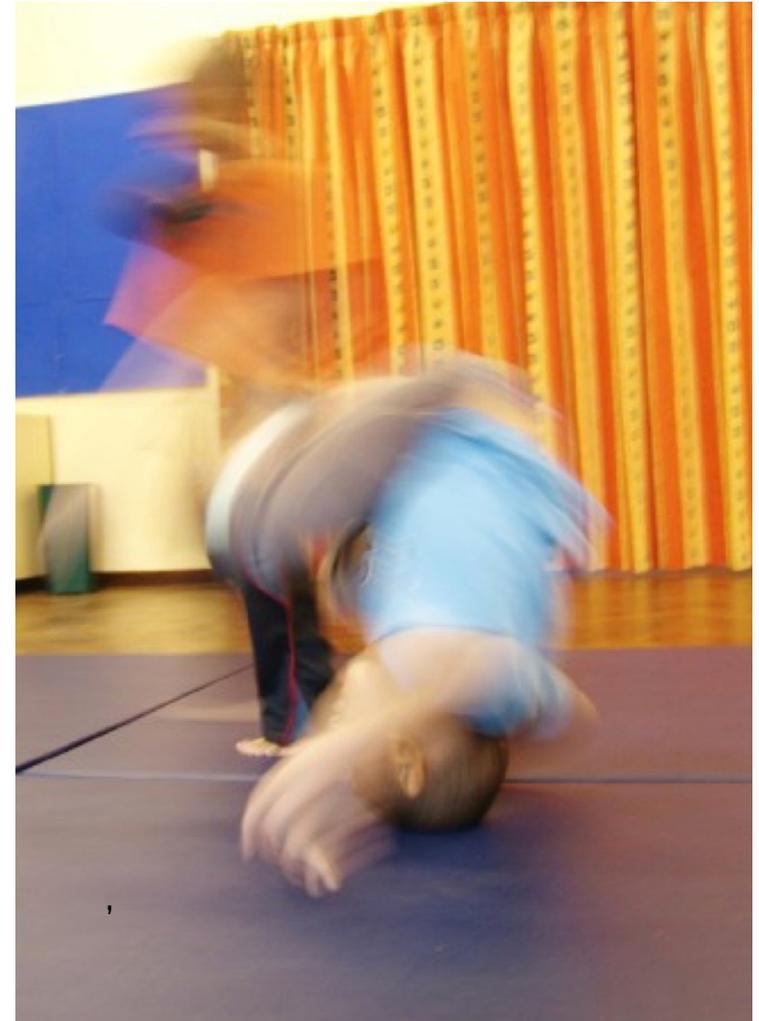
Think afresh about children's movement play choices

Notice the places, spaces and resources that are currently supporting lots of this developmental work in your setting. Can you make more of this?

Make more inviting floor spaces if necessary

Offer resources as much for their potential to support sensation-rich movement as for their support for motor development

And most of all - let children know you see, understand and value their sensation-rich movement play



Join us for The Feeling of Me to dive deeper

- Learn about the four core body senses that create body awareness (whole-body touch, proprioception, the vestibular sense and interoception)
- Create sensory profiles of your children around these four core body senses
- Unpack how sensory development and sensory processing support all areas of learning and wellbeing
- Discover how some 'behaviours' might be an indicator of sensory need - and how to support that
- Offer more detailed support for your children

**Online Course:
The Feeling of Me**

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