

## **Body Awareness**

Body awareness includes knowing where your body is in relation to the world around you, right and left discrimination, and spatial relations. It also helps us to know how much pressure to apply to objects and how to manipulate and hold objects. In early childhood, (preschool & kindergarten) children are learning about their bodies. Poor body awareness can lead to difficulties in handwriting, pencil pressure, and poor pencil grasp. In addition, it can contribute to difficulties with age appropriate gross motor activities in gym and on the playground. Activities that focus on body awareness can help promote a child's skills to enable success with gross motor and fine motor tasks. The following activities may help to encourage and develop body awareness:

Have the child look into a mirror and see where his head is. Have the child touch his body parts as he names them.

Name body parts for children to touch or move. "Touch your toe." "Move your head." Next, ask him/her to touch/move different body parts with their eyes closed.

Instruct him/her to touch one body part to another (head to knee, wrist to ankle). Then suggest he/she touch body parts to other parts that you know are impossible. This teaches that some body parts have limitations (head to stomach for example)

Give each child a paper "circle" or other shape and instruct them to use it in different ways (put your circle on your shoulder, under your chin, etc). Or, have the child put a specific body part to an object, for example nose to window, head to floor, finger to door.

Without verbal prompts, have the child copy your actions, for instance nodding his/her head, clapping hands, wriggle his/her nose.

Have the child stand tall (arms above head), stand small (crouch down), stand wide (arms at sides), stand narrow (arms hugging himself), stand happy, sad, angry, excited, tired, etc.

Exercises increase body awareness and thus improve body image. Use balance boards, balance beams, chinning bars, ropes, swinging, hopping, rolling, skipping, jumping jacks, etc. Set up obstacle course.

Animal 'walks' i.e. jump like a kangaroo, slither like a snake, crawl like a spider, stomp like an elephant

Play on playground equipment.

Have the child put "face puzzles" together. Later make a puzzle of the whole person and have the child put it together, naming the parts.

*If you have any questions, please contact your Occupational Therapist.*

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Use worksheets containing drawings of people with missing features. Have the child tell you which parts are missing, then complete the drawing.

Draw picture of themselves

Cutting out different body parts from magazines etc

Trace their bodies. Have child draw details (eyes, nose, etc).

each about right/left. When the child comes into group, put a sticker, a marker, dot, or rub lotion on the child's right hand. Follow this up with activities involving the right side of the body (shaking hands).

Songs/Games

Have children line up (teams if enough kids). Carry beanbags on different body parts to set point and back. Body parts include – head, toe, between knees, shoulder, back, between elbows, etc.

Simon Says, Head n Shoulders, Hokey Pokey, Follow the leader

My Fingers Are Starting To Wiggle (tune: bear went over the mountain)

My fingers are starting to wiggle,

My fingers are starting to wiggle,

My fingers are starting to wiggle,

My fingers are starting to wiggle,

Wiggle all around

(add other verses by simply changing

the word "fingers" - hands, arms, legs, nose, toes, etc.)

At the very end, its always nice to finish with:

My whole body's starting to wiggle,

My whole body's starting to wiggle,

My whole body's starting to wiggle,

I think I'd better sit down