



## VRANCH HOUSE

### Ideas to develop better body awareness

**Body Awareness:** is the conscious awareness of where the body is, and how it moves in space. It is an awareness of how the body parts relate to each other and how they relate to the wider environment.

It is important to be able to name and point to different body parts – even with eyes closed.

Body Awareness is closely linked to the vestibular (balance) system & proprioception (the 'SIXTH' sense).

A child with poor body awareness tends to rely on visual information & may not be able to move properly if he cannot see where his limbs are. Without this visual information, the child may fall out of his seat.

#### Functional Implications:

- Self-concept, e.g. not being able to identify body parts/knowning R from L.
- Fine motor control – not being able to use fingers/hands/arms is moving without being able to see.
- Spatial awareness - difficulty knowing where body is in relation to objects, frequently bumping into chairs and other children when moving about the classroom.
- Drawing - disorganised pictures of a person with parts missing.
- Self-Care – difficulties with certain tasks e.g. dressing – particularly buttons, zips, socks.
- PE - lack of fluid movements in PE and physical activities. Difficulty following instructions relating to body movements. Difficulty placing body in positions where they cannot see the limbs.

#### Activity suggestions to help improve Body Awareness:

1. Body scheme songs e.g. 'Heads, shoulders, knees and toes'. 'This little piggy'.
2. Use of rhythm e.g. march around the room to the beat of a metronome.
3. Dressing-up games.
4. Simon says - can be played with eyes open and closed. Follow the leader.
5. Follow a sequence of simple instructions, point to body parts, touch named body parts, or tighten and relax named body part - (can be done with eyes open or closed)
6. Twister.
7. Obstacle games - moving around, over, under, towards, through etc.
8. Move around the room in different ways e.g. crab walk, bunny hops, wiggly worm.
9. Roll in different ways e.g. forwards, backwards, sideways on different textures.
10. Water activities, swimming.
11. Encourage your child to carry heavy things (within reason) e.g. ask them to help carry in the shopping, carry small but heavy boxes, push and pull activities are also good.
12. Mime: Acting out character actions of a particular occupation e.g. driving a bus.
13. Life size drawings - draw around the child's body while lying on the floor on top of a large piece of paper. Identify different body parts as you draw them.
14. Mirror game - stand facing a partner and copy their exact movements.
15. Use bubbles in the bath. Rub them on a body part and ask the child to wash them off and name the body part.
16. Physical activities in the park or riding a scooter or bike, playing in the woods, making dens.

#### Strategies in Help Develop Body Awareness

- Use different work stations where the child needs to work in different positions e.g. stand, kneel, high-kneel, half-kneel or lie prone (expect at least 5 mins. in each position).
- Record their daily progress: use reward charts or tokens
- Use whole body movements and large body movements before moving to smaller, finer movements.
- Good body awareness and good proprioceptive awareness go hand in hand. This awareness is fundamental to all movement development.