

## Sensory Integration is....



Sensory Integration is the organisation of sensation for use.

Our senses give us information about the physical conditions of our body and the environment around us. Sensations flow into the brain like streams flowing into a lake. Countless bits of sensory information enter our brain at every moment.

Most people are familiar with our 5 main senses i.e. Sense of touch, taste, smell, sight and sound however there are two more senses that provide our body with important sensory information and that is our sense of gravity and balance (**vestibular** sense) and our sense of position and movement (**proprioceptive** sense). Our sensory systems form the foundation for academic learning and social behaviour. The brain must organise all incoming sensations if a person is to move and learn and behave in a productive manner. When the flow of sensations is disorganised life can be like a rush hour traffic jam!



**Proprioception** is the awareness of our body position. Parts of our muscles and joints sense the position of our body and send these messages to our brain. We depend on this information to know exactly where our body parts are and to plan our movements. Proprioceptive rich activities can also help to calm and organise our bodies, improve concentration and prepare us for learning.

### If a child has difficulty with proprioceptive processing they may.....

- Deliberately “bump and crash” into objects in the environment
- Stamp or slap his feet on the ground when walking
- Rub his hands on tables, bite or suck on his fingers, or crack his knuckles
- Have difficulty knowing where his body is in relation to objects and people, frequently falling, tripping and bumping into things.
- Holds his pencil too lightly to make a clear impression or so tightly that the point breaks.
- Have poor posture, slumps in chair or over table

Click on this link below to watch this short video about proprioception:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2iOliN3fAE>

## Proprioceptive activities!

Engaging in proprioceptive activities that require lots of movement and feedback to muscles and joints can help to improve body awareness, improve motor coordination and regulate arousal level. Below is a list of some activities that you can try at home....

- Jumping with a skipping rope
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Building a fort with chairs and pillows
- Pushing/ pulling/ lifting heavy objects, like helping to carry shopping bags
- Tug of war
- Animal walks
- Hanging from the monkey bars
- Climbing equipment in the playground
- Household chores: hovering, sweeping, mopping, carrying washing basket with wet clothes, cleaning windows, squeezing spray bottles
- Pillow fights
- Eating chewy snacks
- Drinking liquids with a straw. (The thicker the liquid the more proprioceptive input e.g. drinking yogurt through a straw)

Yoga is a great activity to give proprioceptive feedback. There are lots of free yoga apps to download on your ipad or smartphone, such as:



Daily Yoga



Super Stretch Yoga hd

- My First Yoga -Animal Poses for Kids for iPhone / iPad provides a series of animal yoga poses for children to improve focus, balance and concentration.
- The Adventures of Super Stretch for iPhone/iPad. Super Stretch is an educational yoga tool to use and teach the fun of physical activity and breathing to children. This app uses the skills of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-regulation to teach lifetime skills.