

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Top tips: senses in motion - developing proprioception and vestibular awareness

Proprioception is the body's ability to sense its own position. It helps children understand where their body parts are in relation to each other and to the space around them - think about the wonder and attention babies give to their hands and feet when they first discover them.

The vestibular system, located in the inner ear, contributes to balance, spatial orientation and the sense of movement. It detects changes in head position and movement, helping children to stabilise their gaze, maintain balance and navigate their environment. Here are some top tips to support these sensory systems, laying the foundation for motor skills and sensory integration.



- Engage children in activities that involve movements such as crawling, running, jumping. See our ['Balancing Act'](#) activity for some ideas
- Create environments that offer a range of sensory experiences, including tactile, proprioceptive and vestibular input, for example, things to balance on, textured surfaces, tunnels, and things to spin and swing on
- Encourage risky play to allow children to engage in activities that challenge their balance and coordination. Climbing structures, balancing activities and accessible obstacles encourage risk-taking and skill development
- Offer hands-on experiences that encourage children to explore different textures, weights and movements. Sensory bins filled with materials like rice, sand or water can provide tactile and proprioceptive input while fostering exploration and creativity
- Encourage children to engage in active play that involves whole body movement, such as dancing, yoga or obstacle courses. You could introduce movement sessions incorporating animal movements or dance to help children develop body awareness and coordination
- Recognise signs of sensory overload or fatigue in children and provide sensory breaks. These breaks can involve activities such as quiet time in a calm space, controlled breathing, rocking, squeezing a stress ball, or deep pressure input from a weighted blanket
- Observe each child's sensory preferences and sensitivities. Offer support and guidance as they explore different movements and sensations.

NDNA products to support you with these tips

- Publication – [The developing child: Super skills for learning](#)

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And more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna