

BODY AWARENESS AND POSITION IN SPACE

Body Image:

Body image refers to the picture we form in our minds of how our body appears to us. This forms a stable point of reference from which we orient objects. A child with a deficit of body image cannot relate to the world around him. He/she bumps into things and loses his/her way.

Body Spatial Organization:

This refers to the ability to move body parts and the body as a unit around the environment. Directionality includes the concepts of forward, backward, and sideways. Laterality refers to left/right discrimination.

Developmental Sequence:

A. Age 2 – 5 Years

Identify body planes, part and movement:

1. Parts of body
2. Planes of body – front, back, side
3. Placement of objects relative to planes while stationary i.e. where is the ball?
4. Gross movement – forwards, backwards, sideways

B Age 5 – 7 years

Left / Right Discrimination

1. Identification of left and right body parts.
2. Placing body plane to plane surface, i.e. touch the top of your head to the wall.
3. Placing object to body involving right and left, i.e. place the ball by your right knee.
4. Identifying the left and right of objects using the child's reference system.

C. Age 6 – 8 Years

Complex judgements of the body and body object relationships.

1. Laterality in relation to objects i.e. place your left side near the wall
2. Crossing the midline, i.e. touch your left ear with your right hand.
3. Identifying detailed body parts, i.e. thigh, calf, individual fingers.

D. Age 8+ years

Judgement on another person's reference system.

1. Static – show me my left arm, facing same way → Facing opposite.
2. Dynamic – hold my shoulders and tell me which way I am moving...left, right. Face same way then opposite.

Suggested program

A. Identifying body parts.

1. Discuss body parts touching them, rubbing them or moving them.
2. Identify parts in a mirror or picture.
3. Use body points to identify parts.
4. Make 3-dimensional figures from plasticine.

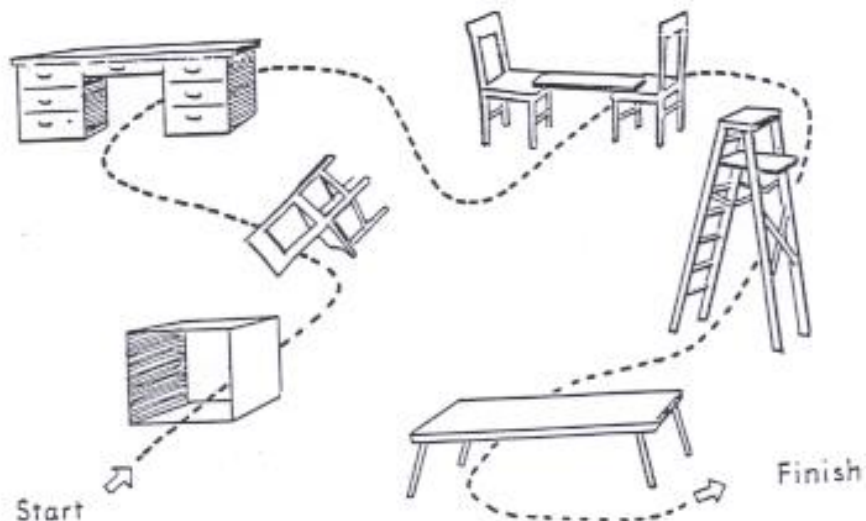
5. Body tracing – child lies on large sheet of paper while others trace around him/her, then label parts.
6. Body puzzles or cut up magazine pictures to put together.



B. Gross Movements of Body

1. Imitation of movement – follow simple basic movements of truck and limbs (calisthenic – like) e.g.
 - Head and neck circles - forward, back and sideways
 - Arms – elbows straighten and bend; circles, swinging; alternative arm swings
 - Waist – twists, forwards, backwards, and side bends
 - Legs – swinging; bend knees up and down; squatting up and down
 - Ankles, fingers, wrists, and toes – straight and circular movements
2. Angels in the snow; jumping Jacks

C. Spatial Organization

1. Follow simple directions
 - Lie with your feet near the door
 - Sit with your back towards the wall
 - Place your front towards the chair.
2. Obstacle Course – Construct a simple obstacle course using chairs, benches, barrels, stairs, table, etc. Use the concepts “over, under through, between, around” etc. Left and right may be added later.



3. Simple mazes – walk through a chair maze without bumping. The child may be asked to move in different ways, e.g. run, skip, jump, hop, etc.
4. Emphasize importance of body part by restricting its use.
 - Get up from the floor without using arms
 - Fold a paper with one hand
 - Stand on one leg and pick up a pencil from the floor
5. Simon Says – body imitation (copying positions)
6. Animal Walks – Imitate Various Animals:
 - Elephant – bend at waist and clasp hands to form a trunk.
 - Bear – on hands and feet 
 - Crab – hands and feet with back facing floor
 - Caterpillar – on hands and feet, first walk feet Forward to meet hands then walk Hands forward, then feet, etc. 
 - Deer – Leaping
7. Body Shapes – Make yourself long, short, small, wide, narrow, large like a balloon.

8. Tumbling – somersaults, rolling.
9. MouseTrap – one half of the class forms a circle, the other half stands outside the circle. The circle moves around with hands joined and raise above their heads. The other children “MICE” run in and out crossing through the circle “TRAP” . When the teacher calls SNAP the trap brings their arms down attempting to trap the MICE. Any mouse caught must join the circle. The game continues until only one mouse is left.

D. Directionality

1. Balance beam or chalk line activities
 - Walk forward, backward, sideways, cross-step
 - Walk on hands and feet
2. Scooter boards – push with arms or legs in straight lines, around obstacles. May be done on back, stomach, or sitting.
3. Treasure Hunt – have the child move in different directions to find a treasure, e.g. take 5 steps forward, 3 sideways towards the door, 4 back, turn around, etc. Right and left directions may be added.
4. Mother May I – all children stand in line, one person is “MOTHER” (“father”), standing on “HOME” away from the group.
Example: Children call out “MOTHER MAY I, take 5 steps forwards?” (any movement can be used) Mother answer “yes, you may” or “no, you may not. You may take 2 steps backwards.” The first person to reach “HOME” is the winner
5. Wheelbarrow Walk

E. Laterality

1. Tie colored ribbons to each wrist to identify left from right.
2. Match hand and foot shapes on floor.
3. Have the child move forward on hands and feet first by moving right hand and foot, then left, etc.
4. Mazes – Treasure hunt – use verbal or written instructions incorporating all directions
5. Hokey – pokey
6. Ball Pass – children in pairs each child has a ball. Children pass ball simultaneously to each other
7. Follow a marked path using left and right.

