

Essential ingredients for healthy development

SENSES

Play,
movement
and time
outside



Activity ideas

Balance

(also known as our vestibular sense)

We use small hairs inside our ears to balance and move. We learn to recognise how fast and what direction we are moving and also how to sit or stand up without falling over. We use this with other senses which is why it is harder to balance with our eyes closed. Some children may want lots of movement and others may feel sick (motion sickness) with a little bit of movement. Generally fast and spinning movements tend to energise us and slow, rocking movements help to calm our bodies.

- Swings - children can lie on their stomachs and 'superman', spin like a tornado, stand up or even play a tug of war.
- Encourage your child to climb up, under, over and through small spaces and on uneven ground. Creeks, beaches and forests provide wonderful opportunities for children.
- Reading. Even if your child can't read yet, stopping to notice nature walk signs and talking about signs or playing 'I spy' nature games (birds, colours, leaves, bugs etc). It may be strange to think this is connected to balance but you use your head (by keeping it still or moving it) to help you see and track things with your eyes.
- Make use of hills - either rolling down, using cardboard, mud or sand slides

Make it easier

- If your child is hesitant. Start slowly and keep activities short. Watch your child - if they become distressed, sick or upset stop the activity.
- Let your child set the pace and control the movement.

add challenge

- + Add movement - using slippery surfaces, walking across rope bridges
- + Smaller base of support and height - challenge children to balance along thinner logs or rails and at greater heights.