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Motor Planning

Motor planning involves the ability to plan and execute an unfamiliar or complicated motor task or novel motor experience in a coordinated fashion. A child with motor planning difficulties may appear clumsy and uncoordinated. Difficulty with motor planning is often associated with decreased body awareness (Ayres, 1965). Children with poor body awareness have a decreased sense of where their body parts/limbs are in relation to each other and their environment. Additionally, perceptual and cognitive skills may impact a child's motor planning and subsequent body awareness.

Activities that provide children with deep pressure or heavy work help increase body awareness by "waking up" the muscles and providing them with a better sense of where they are in relation to the rest of the body. In performing challenging motor planning activities (such as those provided in this chapter), it is important to precede these activities with deep pressure and/or heavy work. Please refer to Chapter 1, on proprioceptive activities, for more ideas.

The activities provided in this chapter will challenge and help improve a child's motor planning skills. A child may make several attempts and require physical or verbal assistance in order to perform these activities successfully. As with any therapeutic activity, the more a child practices, the

better the child will be able to generalize the gained skills into other new and challenging activities.

MOTOR PLANNING TREATMENT ACTIVITIES

Ball Activities

- Neck ball: Child holds a ball with neck and passes it along to another child's neck without using hands (Figure 2-1).
- Tic-Tock-Tire: Therapist hangs up a tire swing (a hula hoop is ok, too) and swings it from side to side. A bucket full of small items (bean bags, Koosh balls, etc.) is placed on the floor to the side of the child. The child is asked to pick up one item at a time and throw it through the moving tire without letting it touch the tire.
 - To make this activity more challenging, ask child to stand on a balance board while throwing the bean bags.