

Integrated Therapy and Care Co-ordination Services for Children

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OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY - OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT

Developing children and young adults need sensory stimulation to help them make sense of the world around them. This is also important in developing good coordination skills and with this a love of movement and a feeling of wellbeing.

A large number of children at Bradstow School have disturbances in the processing of sensory information and may not have had the opportunities to take part in activities that stimulate these senses.

There are 7 senses – sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, balance (vestibular) and body awareness (proprioception).

Difficulties with the proprioceptive system can have a big impact on a child's behaviour making them feel out of control and...

The first five senses are often stimulated well in everyday activities, but with the vestibular and proprioceptive senses it is more difficult to challenge these and children need to have opportunities put in place to do this.

Some children crave movement and deep/heavy muscle input to make them feel well and help concentration. There are also a number of children who do not engage in games, but need the input to increase their alertness levels and help with overall fitness and muscle tone.

Outdoor Equipment

Being outside stimulates – sight, hearing, smell and touch but the use of outdoor fitness/play equipment will also give opportunity to work on proprioception and balance skills

Types of equipment

- Rowing machine – gives input to the proprioception and vestibular systems and develops general muscle strength and cardiovascular.
- Treadmill – gives proprioceptive and vestibular input and increases cardiovascular input
- Roundabouts and spinners – give vestibular input but also stimulate the visual system as the child turns.
- Wobble beams – vestibular and proprioceptive input and also helps concentration.
- Exercise bike – gives proprioceptive input, works on postural muscles and cardiovascular fitness
- Monkey bars/horizontal ladder – this works on balance and proprioceptive but also builds up the strength in the upper arms and grip that help with improving fine motor skills

Additional points

- Making activities in “stations” can help to organise and give a focus of where to start
- “Training buddies” looked good as a way to mimic?
- Activity trail with step ups or a running circuit?