



Month 8: Swinging, Spinning and Rocking

Introduction

Objectives of this month:

1. Caregivers will understand the importance of vestibular input in a child's motor development.
2. Caregivers will learn fun and easy ways of incorporating age-appropriate vestibular activities into their environments.
3. Children will learn various games and activities that provide them with swinging, spinning and rocking input.
4. Children will explore movement and their physical environments through fun vestibular activities which will aid in the growth and development of the entire sensory-motor system.

Importance of Swinging, Spinning and Rocking

- Swinging, spinning and rocking all provide the body with vestibular input. This type of input assists children in learning about movement, gravity, and changing head positions – our vestibular system tells us if we are moving or remaining still, as well as the direction and speed of our movement.
- We develop our relationship to the earth through the vestibular system, and without receiving this type of input and learning to respond to it appropriately, children can be at risk of having sensory difficulties.
- The vestibular input we receive through swinging spinning and rocking assist us in properly using our vision, preparing our posture, maintaining balance, planning our actions, moving, calming ourselves down, and regulating our behaviours.
- There is a strong link between the vestibular system and the auditory system (both respond to vibration), and many children demonstrate increased vocalization and expressive language when engaged in these types of movement activities. Babies often babble more when they are swinging, and children with language delays often are able to produce more words when rocking and tumbling.
- It can just be a lot of fun to engage in these type of activities, and will often alert or wake kids up if they've been sedentary for too long!!

References:

SPARC: Sports and Recreation New Zealand (2008). Balance: swinging, spinning and rocking. Active Movement.

Yack, E., Sutton, S., Aquilla, P. (1998) Building Bridges through Sensory Integration. Willowdale (ON): Print 3, Syd and Ellen Lerer