

## SENSE OF BODY AWARENESS (5-12 Years)

**Question 3: Does your child tend to use more force than required and frequently breaks toys or uses too much force and can unintentionally hurt others?**



### Strategies and Suggestions

Children who are unable to judge force properly can appear very 'heavy handed' and are often described as being rough with others. You often observe that type of behaviour in toddlers when they go to hug another infant and their mums rush in to prevent them from squeezing the living daylights out of their friend! It is not intentional, it is simply that they cannot judge force properly.

Try different activities to help your child become more aware of how much force to use:



- Bouncing on a trampoline is a good way of providing extra proprioceptive input.
- Practice ball games together; throwing is easier than catching so start with throwing games. Draw a target on the garden wall or on a pavement with chalk. Vary the distance your child stands away from the target so they learn to use different amounts of force. Once your child is confident with throwing, start to introduce catching games such as throwing a tennis ball at the wall and catching it after it rebounds.



- Playing at 'wheelbarrows' is good for developing upper limb strength, which in turn helps with awareness of force and pressure. If you are not strong enough to hold your child's legs then get them to 'walk' with their hands over a therapy ball.



## SENSE OF BODY AWARENESS (5-12 Years)

### Question 4: Does your child love rough and tumble play?

#### Strategies and Suggestions



Often children enjoy rough and tumble play and it is a good way of developing body awareness (proprioceptive) skills. You need to supervise your child to ensure that they are getting the experiences they are seeking without hurting others unintentionally. Why not try the following activities with your child:

- Play 'hot dogs'; roll your child up in a duvet or bath towel and using firm pressure squeeze them all over whilst pretending to apply tomato sauce and mustard. Avoid playing this immediately after meal times to reduce the risk of squeezing out dinner!!
- Get your child to help with 'heavy' housework tasks such as pulling wet washing out the machine, hanging it out, vacuuming a room and carrying in shopping. Try using a reward chart as an incentive to get them to help.



- Set up a tug of war game; if you have no older siblings who can play this with your child, tie a rope to a solid (and immovable) object and get them to pretend to pull it along.

