

SENSE OF MOVEMENT AND BALANCE (5-12 Years)

Question 6: Does your child seek out all kinds of movement to the point it interferes with daily routines e.g. they can't sit still in class or they fidget?



Strategies and Suggestions

- Some children who require to move a lot appear to be fidgeting and not paying attention. Children who seek movement can often concentrate as long as they are able to fidget at the same time.



- There are lots of fidget toys available which can be provided to offer your child discreet opportunities to play with something in class without distracting other children. These can include pencil toppers, hand held fidget toys that can be kept in a pencil case or in your child's pocket, and key chain fidget toys that can be attached to a zip on a fleece or pencil case.



- The use of an air filled wedge shaped cushion can also allow your child an opportunity to move whilst 'sitting still' in class. These cushions are useful to use during periods when the child is expected to concentrate on a piece of work.



- It is a well-researched fact that optimum concentration levels are sustained for approximately 20 minutes, and that children work better after a 'movement break'. Try introducing class exercises just before you ask them to sit down and focus. This could be as simple as getting the whole class to do 10 chair push ups before starting a writing activity. Look on KIDS Scotland for further suggestions for whole class exercise ideas.



- Change positions for play i.e. sitting on a cushion, sitting on the floor, standing, sitting on a gym ball
- Use visual timetables, visual cues, and social stories to teach your child what behaviour is expected of them, what is to happen next

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Question 7: Does your child frequently twirl or spin themselves throughout the day?



Strategies and Suggestions

This is another sign that your child's sense of movement (their vestibular system) has not fully matured yet. Your child is seeking intense movement in an effort to stimulate their vestibular system.

- The stopping and starting of movement is more stimulating (and thought to be more beneficial) than the movement itself, so playground activities where your child can change direction, come to a sudden halt, or move at both fast and slow speeds are all good. Spinning & stopping the roundabout or pushing and stopping the swing are great fun, so are games such as 'tig' and 'musical statues'.



- Use outdoor spaces as much as possible; the fresh air as well as the movement will help your child's wellbeing. Try using a see-saw or getting your child to swing on the monkey bars and then jump to the ground.



- If you need your child to sit for a while but they struggle to do so, try using a vibrating cushion with them for short periods. Intense vibration can provide the movement stimulation your child is seeking.

