Teaching Body Awareness to Students with Visual Impairments and Additional Disabilities

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Introduction and Purpose

Children who grow up without useful visual information often have difficulties with motor planning, are at risk for delayed motor development, and may have sensory integration deficits.

- Body awareness leads to concept development which is the foundation for more complex concepts and abstract reasoning.
- Motor responses significantly increase when modeled.
- Concepts must be taught more deliberately to students who are blind and visually impaired.

Importance of Body Awareness

- The conceptual understanding of body, space and environment provides the purpose for physical movement and helps foster the development of safe and efficient O&M travel skills.
- Purposeful, self-initiated movement is essential for developing motor skills.
- ONLY through active movement can muscle tone, proprioceptive awareness and coordination occur.
- Early intervention minimizes sensory delays.

Strategies for Improvement of Body Awareness

- Facilitating sensorimotor functioning is important: for all persons with visual impairment but especially in children.
- Hands on facilitation and demonstration is necessary.
- Consider prerequisite abilities and functional skills necessary when planning activities.
- Make BAMM or other motor activities a daily routine.
- Provide consistent cues at consistent times.
- Make the activity and environment predictable.
- Allow familiarization time as needed.
- Infuse object, tactile, and picture symbols as appropriate.
- Provide wait time to allow for motor planning.
- Keep track of what is motivating to the child.

Benefits of Using the BAMM App

- Video modeling
- High-contrast color
- Visual, tactual, auditory choice making
- Tempo adjustments
- Facilitates consistency
- Lyrics that emphasize body awareness concepts

Rocking Horse

Functional Purpose
Transiting from floor to standing. Shifting weight in preparation for bringing knee up.

Concepts
On all fours; knees; hands; toes; face down; forward/back; balance.

Egg Wobbling

Functional Purpose
Transiting from sitting on floor to standing.

Concepts
Reaching for objects in various places; laterality; crossing legs; on top of; shifting weight in sitting.

Dolphin Swim

Functional Purpose
Controlling lower legs from prone position to improve awareness

Concepts
Front of body on floor; tummy; face; cheek; elbows; focus on knee down movements; alternating legs.