

## Sensory Seekers: Movement Seeking

This resource was created for Early Years practitioners in Perth and Kinross to provide support and strategies to meet the needs of children who seek out higher levels of movement-specific sensory experiences, such as climbing, throwing and so on.

The following video was created as a quick guide, but there are further resources and ideas below that will help to guide your response when supporting young children who seek movement.



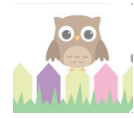
### What is Movement Seeking?

Everyone uses their senses in everything they do. We need sensory information to allow us to live our lives, guide our actions and behaviours, and make choices. We will process hearing the sound of the doorbell, for example, and respond by making effort to answer the door. When we see a puddle in the street, we will use the information to choose whether to walk around or through it. Most adults can effectively process the information coming through each of our five senses and filter out anything unwanted to remain alert and focussed.

Children are more easily distracted than adults, but most can process and filter information in the way typically expected for their age and/or developmental stage. Other children seek out additional or exaggerated sensory experiences because their filters do not let in enough information and so they actively seek to compensate for this.

Movement seekers engage in excessive climbing, throwing, fidgeting, spinning or rough play because they are seeking heightened experiences due to their low sensory-processing abilities. Children seeking these sensory experiences have no control over this response and practitioners should not consider it as a negative behavioural issue. Instead, practitioners should have strategies in place that will meet the child's need and help them to focus better. Adaptations to the environment may be necessary to ensure children are engaged in appropriate activities that meet their sensory needs and keep them safe from harm.

### What Behaviours are Typical of Movement Seekers?



Climbing- Some children climb because their sensory systems are telling them they need vestibular movement and others because of learned responses.

Throwing-Throwing is a multi-sensory experience which includes the physical action of throwing, the visual experience as the object is moving, and the auditory satisfaction as the object lands,

Fidgeting-Children who fidget or are constantly active need exaggerated input to allow them to process information into their brain. Even though they are told to walk, for example, their brains tell them to run.

Spinning- Some children spin, rock, or swing as ways to stimulate their brains, focus, or self-regulate.

Rough Play- Children with non-typical body awareness experience touch sensation and the use of force differently. This makes it difficult for them to judge the correct amount of force when playing with objects or with other children.

### How Can I Support Movement-Seeking Sensory Needs in the Setting?

Every child in the early years benefits from a wide range of sensory experiences and physical activities offered as daily opportunities both indoors and outside. Children with movement-seeking sensory needs may need additional opportunities to move in structured ways that will reduce disruption within the setting and keep the child, other people, and resources in the setting safe from harm.

The infographs below will provide strategies and examples for practitioners to try out which may help to support children with movement-seeking sensory needs within the setting. All strategies will be made more effective through the use of consistent and praise from staff.

# CLIMBING



If a child is climbing on something unsafe, direct them to something safer like a climbing frame.



Try a no climbing visual on the window sill or bookshelf that you don't want them to climb on. Red and Green visuals are an easy way to indicate safe and unsafe areas for climbing.



Create a safe climbing space using logs or other materials where children can be redirected.



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# THROWING



Try to turn random throwing into a purposeful activity. Children can throw Lego bricks back into the storage container, throw beanbags into a hoop, or stones into a bucket of water.



Precious items such as tablets can have a no throwing symbols stuck on to it.



Flour or baby talc in a tuff spot can support a child who likes the sensory feedback of throwing sand or gravel. You could also add cotton wool balls or pom-poms to add a bit of texture. The flour and talc are much safer to throw and will not harm anyone around them and the child is still fulfilling their need to throw.



## SENSORY SEEKERS

# FIDGETING



Give these children opportunities to run or jump before asking them to sit still for an activity.



Give these children extra space during group activities to prevent them disturbing others. Try a wobble cushion or a gym ball to allow them to create a moving sensation while sitting.



Consider creating a sensory path or corridor which provides lots of sensory input. Direct the child to use these resources when needed, or just before a seated activity.



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# SPINNING



Regularly practice strategies to develop stopping and starting skills such as songs, traffic lights or counting.



Direct the child to other vestibular activities such as climbing, and swinging.



Encourage the child to engage in movement such as short exercises or using outdoor climbing areas before any seated activities.



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# ROUGH PLAY



Provide these children weighted objects to carry such as a backpack filled with heavy books, or a box full of blocks.



Allow opportunities for the children to push and pull heavy items such as furniture or filled trolleys.



Encourage the child to engage in movement such as short exercises or using outdoor climbing areas before any seated activities.



## What Resources Could I Use to Support Movement Sensory Seekers?

A range of different resources could be used to support children with movement-seeking sensory needs. All children will have different individual needs and preferences that need to be considered when contemplating resources that may facilitate the support strategies in place. Many of the resources may already be available in the setting.

 <p>Logs or similar</p>	 <p>Flour or Talcum powder</p>
 <p>Weighted items such as bean bags and soft balls</p>	 <p>Weighted lap pad</p>
 <p>Fidget toys</p>	 <p>Squeezable resources</p>
 <p>Outdoor items to meet movement needs</p>	 <p>Opportunities for pushing and pulling</p>





Wobble cushion



Exercise ball

## CIRCLE

Practitioners are encouraged to continually reflect on the CIRCLE framework which empowers them to strengthen their provision by creating a rich and inclusive environment, where the barriers to learning are consistently critiqued, and each learner is supported with individualised strategies and effective practice. The four circle sub-themes can be used to develop best practice and support all children, including those with movement-seeking sensory needs.

Please find more information at [Education Resources | ThirdSpace](#)