



## **Patterned, Repetitive, Rhythmic**

### **Somatosensory Activities**

Patterned, repetitive, rhythmic, somatosensory (involving the body) activities can be very regulatory. These activities utilise rhythm and are especially beneficial for brain-stem and bodily regulation which can help down or upregulate the nervous system to support students to more flexibly shift their bodily states to support us to be more ready for learning and socialising. These exercises are invitational, if something feels dysregulating or unsupportive, please invite your child to do something different that feels better for their body.

#### **Bouncing**

Bouncing can be a way to support regulation by stimulating the vestibular and proprioceptive systems and to bringing rhythm to the body.

You can try standing with softly bended knees and then begin to rhythmically bounce up and down as you soften through your face and jaw, shoulders, arms and hands. You can move between bigger movements and more gentle ones. You might even let your voice go along with the bouncing as you sigh and allow any sound to come out. This can be fun if done with others which can bring in the resource of laughter and social engagement.

#### **Swaying movements**

Rhythmic Rocking or Swaying from side to side while seated or from standing. The important element of these movements is to cross the midline of your body. Let yourself sway to the right and left as you continue to breath.

If you like you might also reach an arm over your head, then across to the opposite side of your body as if you are picking a piece of fruit off a tree. Alternate hands continuing to reach with one hand and then the other. After about 10 rounds, return to centre and pause and notice how you feel. You may feel more energised, you may feel more grounded and able to focus better.

#### **Balancing**

This is another way to stimulate your vestibular system. Start with a simple exercise by lifting one foot off the floor.

If you are comfortable you could try removing your shoes for this practise as the muscles in your foot will be better able to support you through micro-movements. If balancing is a challenge for you can begin with support, placing a hand on a chair or wall. Find a gentle rocking movement while seated in a chair.

*Please note some may find the vestibular (swaying) movement too much, others may seek more of it for satiation. If your child is finding it dysregulating, they can stop at any point and regroup. The vestibular system is a sensory system located in the inner ear that helps maintain balance, spatial orientation, and coordination of movement.*



## **Dancing**

Dancing brings rhythm to the body and rhythm is very regulating.

## **Walking**

Walking alone or together with peers/family.

## **Jogging**

Jogging is a good rhythmic regulating activity.

## **Drawing and Colouring**

These are also good alternatives for more rhythmic engagement.

## **Tapping the Body**

Rhythmically tapping the body can up or down regulate.

## **Chewing to Regulate**

Rhythmic chewing can help to regulate. Crunchy foods, in particular, have been known to produce a stimulating reaction that enhances attention and alertness. Crunching on carrots, crackers, eating a chewy bagel.

## **References**

These exercises are adapted from various sources, including the work of Dr Arielle Schwartz and Bruce Perry.