

# INTEROCEPTION

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## THE SENSE THAT HELPS A CHILD UNDERSTAND AND FEEL WHAT IS GOING ON INSIDE THEIR BODIES.

The sense that allows a child to notice internal signals is known as interoception.

Interoception provides information regarding how a child's body feels and what it needs for regulation. It helps children notice and understand body signals such as hunger, thirst, temperature, energy levels, emotions, pain, muscle tension, and the need for rest, toileting needs or movement.

Interoception activities and input help children develop the ability to recognize how their body feels, understand emotions and body sensations, communicate needs, self-regulate and build independence with daily routines.

Difficulties with interoception may significantly impact your child's ability to notice or interpret internal body signals. This can impact emotional regulation, toileting awareness, eating and drinking habits, sleep, attention/focus, energy and coping levels.

These activities may help a child slow down, notice body clues, and connect sensations to emotions and regulation strategies. Every child experiences body signals differently.

Gently encourage your child to participate; never force or coerce him/her. Consult with your child's therapist for specific recommendations regarding which activities are suitable for his/her age and individual needs.

## INTEROCEPTION ACTIVITIES:



### HEAD/BRAIN:

- Deep breathing exercises
- Mindfulness or meditation activities
- Complete body scan check-ins
- Notice fast vs. slow thoughts



### EYES:

- Compare bright vs. dim lighting
- Visual breaks during reading
- Eye tracking games
- Sensory bottles



### MOUTH:

- Compare crunchy, chewy, cold, and warm foods
- Blow bubbles or pinwheels
- Calming chewing strategies



### EARS:

- Use calming music or headphones
- Identify loud vs. soft sounds
- Explore nature sounds



### STOMACH:

- Practice identifying hunger/fullness cues
- Discuss butterflies or tummy feelings
- Notice stomach growling sounds
- Use food and drink tracking visuals



### BLADDER/BOWEL:

- Use scheduled bathroom body check-ins
- Discuss early vs. urgent bathroom signals
- Use visuals for toileting routines
- Track hydration and bathroom needs



### HEART/LUNGS:

- Notice heartbeat before after exercise
- Compare calm vs. fast breathing
- Practice belly breathing
- Use breathing visuals or stuffed animals



### MUSCLES:

- Yoga or stretching activities
- Carry, push, pull, or climb safely
- Use resistance bands or obstacle courses



### SKIN:

- Compare hot vs. cold items
- Explore textures with sensory bins



### HANDS/FEET:

- Walk barefoot on different textures
- Use fidgets and discuss body changes
- Explore messy play activities



### WHOLE BODY:

- Complete movement breaks. How does your body feel before? After?
- Use swings or climbing equipment
- Use weighted blankets or deep pressure
- Make a "Body Check Chart"
- Label body areas with descriptor words

### EXAMPLES OF INTEROCEPTION BODY SIGNALS:



Hunger



Fast Heartbeat



Pain/Hurting



Calm/Worried



Thirst



Need to use Bathroom



Tight/Sore Muscles



Need to Focus



Hot/Cold



Full Bladder



Tired/Awake



Sick