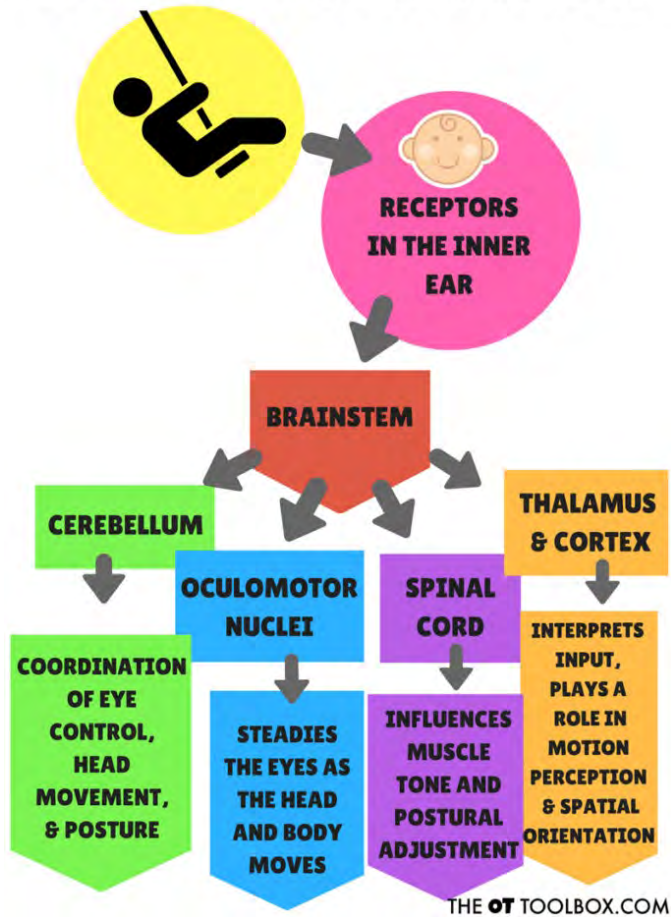


# THE VESTIBULAR SYSTEM



Today we stimulated the children's vestibular system with some rolling and driving exercises. Here the children could choose from roller boards, balancing and pushbikes, scooters and other items with rolling motions. Mina quickly found her favourite training object, a blue balancing bike.



'This is soooo AWESOME !', she shouted adding a big smile and explaining how fast she could go and was trying to keep up with the teachers on their roller and inline skates

OT Therapists use movement and play based tasks with sensory tools such as obstacle courses, sensory swings, scooter boards, and slides to develop coordination and motor planning in daily activities. ([www.theottoolbox.com/vestibular-activities/](http://www.theottoolbox.com/vestibular-activities/))

For us at preschool rolling and driving scooters, jumping on the trampoline and balancing over tree stumps, sliding off the slide and even dancing daily to music are common activities the children love to be engaged with.

At sport we took the liberty to use the whole sports hall for rolling and driving through slalom obstacles, moving to music and sharing the fun and equipment with others. The teachers put on skates and joined the children in being active too, joining in their fun.



The children demonstrated good spatial awareness and oriented themselves well, moving around confidently and safely.



Today's activity provided a range of learning opportunities and challenged the children to make appropriate decisions regarding their participation. The children engaged in restful experiences throughout the sport session, transitioning from fast to slow movements or even just sat back and rested in the wooden boxes, waiting to be pushed around the hall.

This session also contributed well to the children's physical and mental development regarding their proprioception and health. Here they extended their sensory experience about knowing where their body parts were in relation to their movements (pushing off or paddling to create motion) and how much strength our muscular power to use to maintain their speed and balance (motor planning and thinking about where to drive). Tristan waited for his friends and chased after Leo and Matteo, changing roles after he had a small break. Mina at one point commented how her body was warming up, feeling her heart beat and explaining that her muscles had to work hard.

Many children experienced the same due to their heavy muscle workout, pushing others or breaking the movements to stop appropriately and safely. These activities apply deep pressure to the muscle and joints and assist with building up strength to withstand injuries and booster physical condition. We will continue to plan for and participate in energetic physical activity with the children to continue developing their fine and gross motor skills, training their cardiovascular and muscle endurance and giving them time to have fun with movement.



Another fundamental movement skill that we often practise in preschool is underarm rolling using the bowling ball and pins. Counting is also thrown into the mix as the children are encouraged to count how many pins they knock over and how many are left standing.



Today shape and pattern formation using number were also a theme as part of the children's play. This became evident when the children were debating over how to set up the pins. 'You have to make it in a line', ordered Theo. 'No it goes like this', replied Eli who proceeded to clump the pins together. Lily and Kaylan jumped in to help. 'I know that there should be one at the front and more at the back', said Lily. 'And it should be in a triangle', added Kaylan. When Eloise had her turn, the children set them up so that the formation looked more like what Lily had spoken about.



'I did a strike!', said Theo. I asked how many he had knocked over and he counted the pins to eight. I pointed out that there should be ten. 'There's two over here', said Mina who had found them ( they somehow had disappeared into the book corner). We counted this combination using the pins talking about how  $8+2=10$ . I also took the opportunity to model how to set up the pins in four rows, using Lily's idea of one at the front. 'There's two behind, then three', said Lily.. 'And four at the back!', said Theo.



When Lily had her turn she did not manage to knock the pins over from the front so she ran to the other side and knocked them, over from the back. 'There!', she said. 'No you can't do that at real bowling...I've been to real, adult bowling and there is a machine and you can't go to that side', insisted Theo. Jack was keen to count out the combination.. 'You got four down Lily! So you have to get one, two, three, four, five, six more.



'I got them all!', exclaimed Mina. She counted them out first really well and when asked to count again she started using teen numbers and beyond 'One, two, three, fourteen, fifteen, nineteen, twenty-four...'

Here the children utilised many different concepts when playing with the bowling set. As well as working on the action involved in rolling (stepping forwards, whilst swinging arm from behind to the front) the children were encouraged to use number combinations to 10. There was also much discussion about 'turns' and the children organised the line to ensure that the division of turns was allocated fairly. Setting the pins up also became an activity in itself as the person having the turn set them up for the next. The pattern formed when completing this also became a focus with the children discussing how many should be placed 'at the front, back and middle'. Here too positional language (language of mathematics in early years) was used.

We will have the children develop and extend this interest in number combinations to 10 further, both using this game and when using other materials or games within their play.



Numeracy: broadly includes understandings about numbers, patterns, measurement, spatial awareness and data as well as mathematical thinking, reasoning and counting

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#### EYLF OUTCOME 5: CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes

This is evident, for example, when children:

- demonstrate an increasing understanding of measurement and number using vocabulary to describe size, length, volume, capacity and names of numbers
- express ideas and feelings and understand and respect the perspectives of others
- use language to communicate thinking about quantities to describe attributes of objects and collections, and to explain mathematical idea

Educators promote this learning, for example, when they:

- model language and encourage children to express themselves through language in a range of contexts and for a range of purposes
- engage in sustained communication with children about ideas and experiences, and extend their vocabulary
- include real-life resources to promote children's use of mathematical language