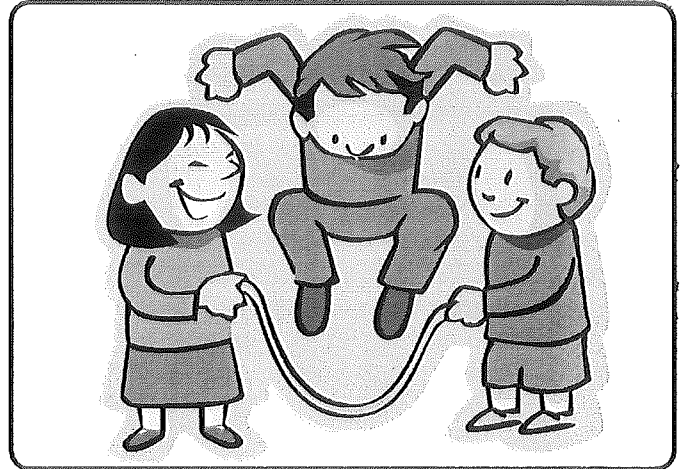


5 Ways to Develop Spatial Awareness

Spatial awareness is the ability to understand and interact with the environment around you. Whether it be avoiding obstacles when walking, reaching out to grab a pencil or determining left from right, these are all examples of tasks that require spatial awareness. Developing the skills to express and understand spatial awareness is the first step in understanding spatial ability such as math skills, visual perceptual skills and body awareness.



Here are 5 activities to help encourage the development of spatial awareness:

- 1. Obstacle Courses:** The ability to negotiate an obstacle course requires a significant amount of spatial awareness. Vary the courses grading them according to the child's ability to move over, under and around objects.
- 2. Build and Create:** Use Legos, blocks and puzzles. Try Tangam puzzles. Research has shown that parents who participated in guided block play with their children had significantly higher proportions of spatial talk. Guided block play consisted of playing with the blocks along with guided instructions for how to build different structures.
- 3. Practice completing patterns.** Lay out different objects in a pattern. For example, stuffed animal, ball, stuffed animal, ball... ask the child to find the object that comes next in the pattern. Move your body in different patterns - squat, stand, arm circles, squat, stand, arm circles
- 4. Movement Games:** Participate in any type of movement games where children have to move around obstacles or friends such as tag or hide and go seek. The ability to move around stationary objects is quite different than around moving objects which are unpredictable.
- 5. Provide verbal descriptions.** Offer many opportunities for children to hear descriptions of where they are or where objects are in relationship to each other. For example - "The pencil is on the right side of the desk" or "Let's step over the log". Play games that require children to follow directions such as moving a game piece forward 6 spaces, do the hokey pokey dance or play Simon Says.