

Forty Minutes of Freeflow before Focus

Fuelling childrens sensory diet in Foundation Stage 2

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Sensory exercises play a vital role in the development of five-year-olds during their time in Foundation Stage 2. This 12-week program focuses on integrating sensory-based exercises into the Foundation Stage 2 classroom to support children's physical and developmental needs. By targeting proprioception and the vestibular system, these activities aim to improve balance, coordination, and body awareness. The program also promotes the development of both gross and fine motor skills, helping children build the strength and control needed for everyday tasks and classroom learning. Through consistent and purposeful sensory input, children become more focused, regulated, and ready to engage with their environment

Research Question

How does integrating sensory exercises into an FS2 classroom impact the attention and focus skills of Foundation Stage 2 students?''

RESEARCH

Benefits

Benefits of Sensory Exercises for Five-Year-Olds

Sensory exercises are designed to meet a child's sensory needs, helping them regulate their sensory input and improve their overall functioning. These activities enhance attention and focus and support self-regulation and impulse control especially important before tasks that require sitting still and concentrating.

They also improve motor skills and coordination, which are essential for tasks such as writing and cutting. In addition, sensory exercises help reduce anxiety and stress, making children feel safe and secure particularly beneficial for those who feel overwhelmed in structured environments.

By preparing the body and mind, these exercises increase a child's engagement and readiness to learn. When their sensory systems are balanced, children feel more organized and are better able to process and retain information.

Methodology

Participants : FS2 students aged 4-5 from a British Curriculum School in the UAE.

Intervention: Implementing sensory based exercises in the classroom for increased proprioception, vestibular engagement and improved gross and fine motor movements over a 12-week period.

Data Collection: Pre and Post Intervention handwriting assessments, student survey on well being and emotions. Assessments by an Occupational Therapist.

Data Analysis: Quantitative Analysis of handwriting scores and quantitative analysis of survey responses and observations and discussions.

Activities

Exercises for increased Proprioception

- Heavy work
- Body Rolls
- Stretching putty
- Simon says with eyes closed

Exercises to Stimulate the Vestibular System

- Jumping on a trampoline
- Bouncing on a gym ball
- Wall push ups
- hopscotch
- Spinning
- Animal walks

CONCLUSION

Reflections

Sensory Activities offer the opportunity for children to improve their attention and focus before beginning a lesson in Foundation Stage 2.

Encouraging children to take part in sensory exercises before learning is a simple yet powerful way to prepare their bodies and minds for the school day. Activities that boost proprioceptive and vestibular input help improve body awareness, balance, and focus key foundations for effective learning. By meeting these sensory needs first, children are more likely to feel calm, alert, and ready to engage in classroom tasks with confidence.

References

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