**Sensory Tips**

Babies use their senses to explore the world around them, receive comfort, and promote skill development. In order to learn to move, we must use our senses to interact with our environment and learn where our body ends and space begins, or have good body spatial awareness. A newborn baby can not only detect the 5 senses of taste, touch, smell, sight, and hearing, he can also detect the proprioceptive and vestibular senses. The proprioceptive sense receives feedback from our muscles and joints. It tells us where our body is in space and helps us move in a coordinated manner. The vestibular sense is our movement sense and it aids in balance and muscle tone. Interactions with the world, changes in body position and exposure to new sights, sounds, and tastes will help to further develop these senses.

Visual

-approach baby from front and midline

-do not place objects above or behind baby’s head when lying on back (promotes arching and extension)

-use a shatter proof mirror while playing on belly

-play peek-a-boo

-use brightly colored toys or toys with moving parts

-point out things in the environment while on a walk

Auditory

-listen to music (fast to alert, slow/soft to calm)

-play with toys that make noise

-read books

-prepare baby for what’s to come (even if you think he won’t understand the words, it’s important to let baby know what’s happening next)

Tactile

-lotion, infant massage

-swaddle

-bubbles

-different textures (soft blankets, ridged toys, touch and feel books)

-water play

-squishy or spiked balls

-play gyms with overhead toys or toys with moving parts

Vestibular

-when picking up baby, turn to side first to work on head righting and lateral trunk rotation

-gently swing baby in blanket

-once your baby can sit up, swing in toddler (bucket) swing at playground (baby will feel more secure leaning forward in swing)

-rolling over ball / bouncing on ball

-wear baby in carrier

-bounce gently on your lap

-tip baby into different positions (hold baby face down and fly in your arms, rock while lying on back in your arms)

Proprioceptive

-roll baby in blanket

-push objects when crawling or walking (inverted laundry basket, push toy, box of toys)

-songs that involve body parts (head, shoulders, knees and toes)

-songs that involve mimicking movements (itsy bitsy spider)

Taste / Smell

-let baby play with food while eating