# Our Senses: Vestibular

Our vestibular system helps process where our bodies are in relation to gravity.

It tells us about position, movement, and balance. Our vestibular system is linked to our visual processing system.

The world can feel very unsafe to people who have vestibular processing difficulties. They can live in a heightened state of anxiety much of the time.

- Some children enjoy car journeys as they this very regulating. As restrictions reduce, it may be worth building this activity up slowly.
- Many children will not have been out in vehicles as much as they used to. This could cause travel sickness for those who have sensitivity to movement. Build up to longer journeys gradually.
- Some children and young people may experience difficulties with navigating busier places and find the movement of people in crowds distressing. Having to stop and start when walking can be problematic for some children. They may find the sensation of moving against gravity painful or distressing.
- Lots of movement can feel very regulating for some children. Activities like visiting the swings in the park when you go to town can be beneficial. Some playgrounds may be closed in order to reduce the risk of infection so alternative activities at home may be beneficial. Swing hammocks that can be hung from doorframes are available if outdoor space is limited.
- Our visual and vestibular processing systems work together and if they are out of sync this can feel distressing.
- It can be helpful to regulate all our senses and not just focus on one of them. Sometimes our children may feel distressed because of noise or a smell that we can do nothing about. In times like this, it may be helpful to work on co-regulation that focuses on balancing the other senses. This could be by reducing distressing visual inputs or introducing activities that are energizing or calming.