



ZOO ZEN GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Vestibular System

Definition: The sensory system located in the inner ear that helps with balance, spatial orientation, and movement control.

Relevance to Actions:

Activities like swinging, spinning, or balancing stimulate the vestibular system.

These actions improve balance, coordination, and the ability to process motion effectively.

Relevant Animal Programme:

Monkey (Swinging): Ideal for students who rock back and forth in class or seek movement to self-soothe.

Example: A child who often rocks in their chair may benefit from Monkey activities to provide structured vestibular input and help them feel calm and focused.





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Proprioception

Definition: The body's ability to sense its position, movement, and force without visual cues, often referred to as "body awareness."

Relevance to Actions:

Actions like jumping, pushing, or squeezing provide proprioceptive input.

Helps students understand their body's position in space and develop muscle control and strength.

Relevant Animal Programme:

Kangaroo (Jumping): Suitable for students who fidget or display high energy, needing input to regulate their bodies.

Example: A child who frequently taps their feet or bounces in their chair could benefit from Kangaroo activities to release energy and improve focus.



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Tactile System

Definition: The sensory system responsible for processing touch, pressure, vibration, temperature, and pain.

Relevance to Actions:

Crawling or using textured materials stimulates the tactile system.

Improves sensory processing and reduces sensitivity or aversion to touch.

Relevant Animal Programme:

Crab (Crawling): Ideal for students who avoid or seek out tactile input through hands and feet.

Example: A student who dislikes certain textures or enjoys floor-based activities may benefit from Crab movements to explore tactile sensations safely.



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Deep Pressure

Definition: A type of tactile input that involves firm but gentle pressure, often through hugs, weighted blankets, or compression.

Relevance to Actions:

Activities involving weighted blankets or pressure-based tools promote a calming effect on the nervous system.

Ideal for grounding and reducing anxiety or overstimulation.

Relevant Animal Programme:

Tortoise (Using Weighted Blankets): Perfect for students who feel overwhelmed or anxious.

Example: A child who often hides under desks or covers themselves with coats may benefit from Tortoise activities to provide a secure, calming experience.



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Cross-Body Coordination

Definition: The ability to use both sides of the body together in a coordinated way, often crossing the midline.

Relevance to Actions:

Movements like crawling or reaching across the body enhance this skill.

Supports brain integration and motor planning.

Relevant Animal Programme:

Crab (Crawling): Suitable for students who struggle with bilateral coordination or motor planning.

Example: A student who has difficulty tying shoelaces or catching a ball might benefit from Crab activities to strengthen cross-body coordination.



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Motor Planning

Definition: The process of planning, organising, and executing a physical movement.

Relevance to Actions:

Sequential activities like obstacle courses or balancing tasks improve motor planning.

Helps students with executing daily functional tasks more effectively.

Relevant Animal Programme:

Flamingo (Balancing): Helps students who struggle with stability and sequencing movements.

Example: A child who often trips or appears clumsy might benefit from Flamingo activities to build core stability and improve motor planning.



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Sensory Integration

Definition: The brain's ability to take in, organise, and interpret sensory information from the environment.

Relevance to Actions:

Structured activities like swinging, spinning, or crawling help integrate multiple sensory inputs.

Improves focus, behaviour, and emotional regulation.

Relevant Animal Programme:

Dolphin (Spinning): Great for students who crave sensory input but struggle to process it effectively.

Example: A child who spins on the spot or loves merry-go-rounds may benefit from Dolphin activities to provide structured vestibular input.



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Emotional Regulation

Definition: The ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences in a socially appropriate way.

Relevance to Actions:

Calming activities like deep breathing, weighted blanket use, or slow movements help regulate emotions.

Encourages self-soothing and stress management.

Relevant Animal Programme:

Cat (Stretching): Suitable for students who need help winding down or managing transitions.

Example: A student who gets easily frustrated during transitions may benefit from Cat activities to promote relaxation.



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Core Strength

Definition: Strength in the muscles of the torso, which are essential for posture, balance, and stability.

Relevance to Actions:

Balancing tasks, like standing on one leg or using a balance board, enhance core strength.

Supports improved sitting posture and endurance for classroom tasks.

Relevant Animal Programme:

Flamingo (Balancing): Ideal for students who slouch or struggle to maintain sitting posture.

Example: A child who often leans on their desk or fidgets while seated may benefit from Flamingo activities to improve posture and strength.



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Body Awareness

Definition: Understanding where the body is in space and how it moves.

Relevance to Actions:

Proprioceptive activities like jumping or pushing heavy objects enhance body awareness.

Reduces clumsiness and improves coordination.

Relevant Animal Programme:

Kangaroo (Jumping): Perfect for students who need to develop body awareness and control.

Example: A child who bumps into others in line or during playtime could benefit from Kangaroo activities to refine spatial awareness.



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Mindfulness

Definition: The practice of focusing one's awareness on the present moment, often through breathing or relaxation techniques.

Relevance to Actions:

Gentle stretches, balancing, or calming movements encourage mindfulness.

Helps students feel centred and reduces anxiety or hyperactivity.

Relevant Animal Programme:

Cat (Stretching): Great for promoting calmness and mindfulness during or after busy periods.

Example: A student who has difficulty calming down after recess may benefit from Cat activities to reset and refocus.