



# Ashton's Place

*Supporting children with Autism*

## PHYSICAL / SENSORY PROCESSING AN ACE OBJECTIVE

Physical motor programmes contribute to a large part of the ACE Programme. The focus is on ensuring sensory needs for all children are met and by promoting motor experiences that meet those needs, we will be supporting the sensory connections that are made. We achieve this by ensuring children's body awareness and sensory connections are explored and encouraged, and their sensory needs are met through a progression of exercises and play-oriented activities that connect body and mind.

"Sensory integration is a term that has been used to describe processes in the brain that allow us to take information we receive from our five senses, organise it, and respond appropriately. We also have a vestibular sense (balance) that tells us how to position our bodies and heads, and a proprioceptive sense (awareness of body in space) that helps us know what we do with our joints, muscles, and ligaments" <sup>1</sup>

A process called sensory integration treats sensory processing problems. "The goal of this is to challenge a child in a fun, playful way so he or she can learn to respond appropriately and function more normally." <sup>2</sup>

We achieve this by offering activities which through modelling will allow children to get used to them so they eventually accomplish them or feel comfortable participating. We also introduce sensory issues in gradual ways that will allow the child to get used to them through a series of repetitive activities promoting confidence.

Our outdoor and indoor environments are sensitive to the sensory needs of the individual children that we welcome into our ACE Programme. We will be ever mindful of supporting their exploration of these environments and introducing materials to challenge and extend them as they master these domains.

#### REFERENCES:

1: Autism Spectrum Disorders: What Every Parent Needs to Know (Copyright © American Academy of Pediatrics 2012)

2: Greenspan & Wieder (DIR) model floortime method