

Interoception

WHAT IS IT?

Interoception is a child's ability to notice internal signals like body temperature, an empty stomach, a fast heartbeat, strong emotions, or needing the bathroom.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Sensors in the body send signals to the brain, which helps the child address their needs by eating, breathing deeply, or using the bathroom.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Missing body signals can cause needs to be ignored. This builds up and leads to meltdowns or shutdowns. Supporting interoception helps children notice and manage their needs sooner.

POOR INTEROCEPTION IN CHILDREN

- Difficulty potty-training or having your child use the bathroom
- Not reacting to something that hurt them
- Skipping meals *or* continuing to eat past fullness
- Crying but being unable to explain why

TEACHING INTEROCEPTION

1. Body scans
2. "How do you know?"
3. Model internal skills
4. Body, emotion, action lessons



Scan for citations
and a related
Youtube video!

TEACHING INTEROCEPTION

BODY SCANS

Guide your child through a mental or visual scan of their body, head to toe.

Help them identify feelings by using words like warm, tight, heavy, empty, fluttery.

“Is your tummy feeling heavy or empty?”

01.

“HOW DO YOU KNOW?”

When a child mentions an emotion, ask them how their body feels.

If they say “I’m excited”, you can ask “Is your heart beating fast?”

If they say “I’m frustrated”, you can ask “What is your body doing right now?”

02.

MODEL INTERNAL SKILLS

Out loud, share your body signals with your child.

“Im starting to feel pressure in my lower belly. I am going to go to the bathroom”

“My stomach feels empty and fluttery. I think I need to eat.”

03.

BODY, EMOTION, AND ACTION LESSONS

Body- have your child pause and notice their body. Use a body scan!

Emotion- connect the body clue to a feeling.

Action- teach a strategy to match the emotion.

Tight fists → angry → squeeze a stress ball or punch a pillow

04.

Write the number that has best worked for your child: _____