

Tiong Bahru Park playground: sensory motor map

What each part works on, and what to try on your next visit

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The train



The swings



Sand, see-saw and spring riders



Stepping planks

A rule of thumb. Slow, steady, rhythmic movement tends to calm. Fast, irregular or spinning movement tends to wake the body up. Every child is different, so watch what yours seeks and avoids.

- 1 Tilted carriages and cabin** VESTIBULAR PROPRIOCEPTIVE RISK
Works on: balance as the ankles, hips and trunk keep adjusting to a sloping floor; vestibular and proprioceptive input.
Try: cross slowly, then low, then upright. Notice which way they choose.
- 2 Tube slide** VESTIBULAR RISK
Works on: fast linear vestibular input (usually alerting); an enclosed, dark space that some find calming and others find too much.
Try: never push a hesitant child. Let them watch others first, or start on the open slide.
- 3 Wavy slide** VESTIBULAR RISK
Works on: vestibular input with small speed changes; trunk control; an open view, which many find less daunting than the tube.
Try: sitting up, lying back, feet first. Each posture asks something different.
- 4 Climbing ramp** PROPRIOCEPTIVE RISK
Works on: proprioceptive input; hand and foot coordination; route planning.
Try: ask "where could your foot go?" instead of lifting them.
- 5 Stairs and ladders** PROPRIOCEPTIVE RISK
Works on: strength, alternating feet, grip on the tall ladder, and choosing a height they feel ready for.
Try: let them decide how high to go.
- 6 Swings** VESTIBULAR PROPRIOCEPTIVE RISK
Works on: linear vestibular input. Slow and rhythmic calms; fast swinging alerts. Also targets trunk control, grip strength and timing.
Try: a gentle sway after a long day, bigger swings to wake their body up. Let them sort out turn-taking first.
- 7 Sand** PROPRIOCEPTIVE TOUCH SOCIAL CREATIVE
Works on: heavy work (dig, carry, pour); touch; balance on a surface that gives; solo, side-by-side and creative play.
Try: bring a bucket, spoon and sieve. If sand is new to them, let them watch or use a tool first.
- 8 See-saw** VESTIBULAR PROPRIOCEPTIVE SOCIAL
Works on: up-and-down vestibular input; pushing through the legs; timing and negotiating with a partner; staying balanced as the seat moves.
Try: swap who pushes. Practise "ready, steady, go".
- 9 Spring riders** VESTIBULAR PROPRIOCEPTIVE CREATIVE
Works on: rhythmic rocking; core strength, grip and balance.
Try: slow rocking which can be calming. A pretend horse ride works too.
- 10 Stepping planks (in front of the train)** CREATIVE
Works on: careful foot placement on fixed planks; motor planning; visual attention.
Try: walk, hop or play follow the leader. A good first step before the tilt.
- 11 Rings, rope net and cables (inside the train)** VESTIBULAR PROPRIOCEPTIVE TOUCH CREATIVE RISK
Works on: heavy work through the arms and shoulders; a rope net floor that shifts with each step; reaching and holding to cross a tilted cabin.
Try: let them choose how far to go and find their own way across.

Three kinds of play (HDB's Play Values Framework): physical, social and creative. Most parts of this playground offer more than one.