

Occupational Therapy Service for Children and Young People

Balance

A good sense of balance is most important in physical activities. It is essential to achieve good static balance (balance while not moving) before moving on to activities involving dynamic balance (balance while moving). Good pelvic and shoulder stability are also essential for successful balance.

Suggested activities to help develop balance skills:

1. Walking along a line with one foot in front of the other, keeping feet as close together as possible.
2. Walking on uneven surfaces e.g. over pillows and duvets on the floor, over lilo's, corrugated cardboard, cardboard boxes, running on sand, stepping stones, uneven logs and moving bridges.
4. Walking on different parts of the feet e.g. on your toes, heels, the outside of your feet, or the inside of your feet. Variations: change direction frequently, e.g. follow lines on the floor, or move in and out of obstacles while walking on different parts of your feet.
5. Climbing on ropes, swinging on adventure playground equipment.
6. Four point kneeling - practice keeping your balance while lifting one arm and leg
 - e.g. - Right arm and right leg.
 - Right arm and left leg.
 - Left arm and left leg.
 - Left arm and right leg.
9. 'Simon Says' games requiring the child to copy movements or follow instructions e.g. hop, stand on one leg.
10. Animal walks: play games where the child walks like a crab, frog, worm, elephant, kangaroo and rabbit.
11. Complete the following activities while in a high kneeling position:
 - Throw items at a target in front and then in different directions e.g. skittles, bean bags in buckets.
 - Catching items from in front and then from side angles
13. Stepping over a knee high piece of string, taking care not to touch it.

Chief Executive: Colin Scales

Headquarters: Europa Point, Europa Boulevard,
Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 7TY

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14. Trampette / Trampoline: Create challenges for the child;
 - Bouncing on knees, bottom, hopping on one leg.
 - Bouncing in a circle.
 - Bouncing from standing to sitting, standing to kneeling etc.
 - Jumping and clapping hands in front of body, behind back, above head.
 - Jumping with feet apart and then together.
 - Hopping on one foot, then changing to the other foot.
 - Jumping sideways, backwards and forwards.
 - Catching a ball and counting while doing any of the above.

15. Balance on one leg; as this gets easier you can add activities, e.g.
 - Practice ball skills throwing and catching a ball against a wall or in the air.
 - Stand with your eyes closed.
 - Turn around while balancing on one foot without your foot leaving the ground.
 - Bend down to pick up items off the ground.

16. Jumping from side to side over a rope or line on the floor.

17. Hopping:
 - a) From side to side over a rope.
 - b) On chalk marks.
 - c) Along a curved pattern on the floor.
 - d) Along a zigzag pattern on the floor.

18. Hop across the room, stop and balance on one leg when given a command.

19. Walk forward along a narrow beam or plank, progress to walking backwards, sideways, taking small steps, with your hands behind your back, with a bean bag balanced on your head.

20. Play 'Twister'. Play hopscotch.

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