

# Gross Motor Skills - Activities to Promote Core Stability

In order to maintain stability children need to balance their body weight whilst moving. When practising balancing activities, some children benefit from stretching out their arms to help maintain balance.

Children with a physical disability may require an aid to support mobility, e.g. crutches, sticks, walking frame or wheelchair. It would be advisable to liaise with the child's physiotherapist for specific advice about the child's abilities.

## Resources:

Beanbag, ball, bubble wrap, cones, material, tunnel, target, wallpaper.

## What to do:

*Rolling* requires coordinated body movements:

Roll to the left - the child lies on the floor, with body straight and arms at their side. The right arm should be placed across the body at the same time as the right leg moves over the left leg.

An adult may need to assist by gently pushing under the right shoulder and near the hip to help the child to complete the roll. To roll over to the right, lead with the left arm and leg.



*Crawling* requires a child to coordinate the left and right side of their body:

Try crawling around a circle going to the left, then to the right.

Cones - set up a slalom course using 3 or 4 cones, encourage the child to crawl.

Obstacle course - try crawling around cones, through tunnels, under material, e.g. a length of bubble wrap or material.

Tunnel - ask the child to crawl through a tunnel or make a 'virtual' tunnel by asking peers to hold a hoop out in front of them creating a tunnel.

Wallpaper line - roll out the paper for 5 or 6 metres, encourage the child to crawl to a toy placed at the end of the paper.



## Extension Activities:

Organise a group of 4 to 6 children, let them crawl round a circle in a clockwise direction. Select another 4 to 6 children to crawl outside of this circle in an anticlockwise direction. Make it a fun activity by asking the children to crawl, following the child in front, weaving in and out of the other circle.

### *Core Stability Games:*

**Ball Push Game** - sit on the floor, on a cushion square or spot, with legs apart. Face a partner push a large lightweight ball forward with one hand towards the partner. Try using the left hand then change to the right hand. Initially the partner would be an adult.

**Ball Pass** - stand opposite a partner. Using two hands push pass the ball to a partner. Try raising the left leg then pass the ball, next try raising the right leg.

**Ball and target** - lying tummy down on the floor, throw a ball at a high target, stimulating the shoulder and head to be lifted off the floor.

**Low kneeling on the floor** - with body resting on lower legs. Push a football size light-weight ball to a partner. Progress to throwing and catching the ball.

**Kneeling up tall: (high kneeling)** - kneel with legs on the floor, move body upwards to form an 'L' shape. Play catching and throwing a large soft ball.

**Try changing position** - start by kneeling on both knees. Try keeping the left knee on the floor, place the right foot forward. Change back to both feet kneeling, then keep the right leg on the floor, place the left foot forward.



**Space hoppers** - provide an opportunity to try balancing on a different surface. Initially an adult may need to hold the child's hand s/he may be 'wobbly'.

**Touch your toes** - try sitting on the floor with legs out in front, stretch the arms to touch the feet, left arm to left foot, then right arm to right foot. Stand up tall then bend at the waist to touch your toes.



### **Top Tips:**

Demonstrate the actions then ask the children to copy.

For partner work it may be helpful for the partner to be an adult, when the child is confident, introduce another child.

Progress to a small group when the child is more confident.

Verbal instructions need simple language. If needed, use gestures to support instructions. Allow time for the child to listen and process the instructions.