

Gross Motor Skills - Activities to Promote Hopping

Hopping can be a difficult activity, as it requires a child to balance their body weight whilst lifting off on one leg. When a child is confident to balance on one foot, s/he can progress to hopping. It would be advisable to liaise with the child's physiotherapist for specific advice about the child's abilities.

A *single leg balance* is the foundation towards running, hopping, skipping and jumping. Free standing then raising a leg to balance can be tricky. Try standing near a wall. Stretch out an arm, reach out with hands and fingers spread against the wall. Now practice lifting a leg. This will help improve muscle strength. You could also try placing the raised foot on a small box or upturned tray for a few seconds to help develop muscle strength.

Resources:

Chair, marker spot, newspaper, tissue paper.

What to do:

Chair back - ask the child to stand behind a chair. Place their hands on the back of the chair. Next the child lifts up one foot, then hops on the spot.

Newspaper - place a piece of newspaper on the floor. Ask the child to stand on the paper, then to lift one leg. Next ask the child to hop independently. The adult quickly removes the paper when the child is in the air (the paper will tear if the foot does not jump).

Paired working - ask two children to stand facing each other. Next the children hold hands. One partner hops on the spot, whilst the other child supports them. Try changing places.



Extension Activities:

Practice independent hopping on the spot, progressing to hopping forwards.

Hop scotch - make use playground hop-scotch markings. Start with a hop -one leg balance - then jump and land with two feet on the floor.

Top Tips:

Demonstrate activities to show the children a good motor pattern. It may prove helpful to choose a child who is a 'good mover' to model the activities.

Use clear instructions, accompanied with gestures if needed.