

Activities to Develop Co-ordination and Gross Motor Skills

Gross Motor Skills Groups

This is one of a series of activities designed to aid the development of a child's gross motor skills. Each session begins with some warm up exercises to improve the children's balance, co-ordination, bi-lateral integration and spatial awareness. A range of equipment is used during the sessions that have been approved and recommended by physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

Most exercises are also attempted without vision.

Equipment used

Benches, hoops, quoits, cones, mats, physio balls, physio rolls, scoot boards, a variety of weights and sizes of balls, rocker board, bubble wrap, bean bags, tunnels, hockey sticks, markers and posts.

How the equipment is used

Benches: to walk forwards, backwards, sideways, on tiptoes, heels and heel to toe. To pull along whilst on stomach, crawl and step ups. Occasionally hoops are placed around the benches and the children crawl under or over them. The benches are usually put out on angles or straight lines.

Quoits, cones and markers: to make courses for the children to follow.

Mats: these are nearly always set out diagonally. Children follow the direction around the edge of the mats by walking, running, knee walking or using hockey sticks and balls.

Tunnels: to crawl through, to roll in and to roll balls through.

Physio ball and roll: to sit on, lay on (front and back), to act as support.

Rocker board: for balance.

Variety of balls: different weights and sizes for visual and spatial perception.

Scoot boards: to lay on, sit on and kneel on.

Edra cones and hoops: are used to make an obstacle course. All the warm up exercises for balance, body awareness, body perception and co-ordination are attempted without vision.

Co-ordination Activities

- With arms at shoulder height and out to the sides, touch the thumb with each finger in order, from index to little and back. Start with the left hand, right hand and then both together. Increase the difficulty of the exercise by changing the order in which you touch each finger to the thumb. E.g., Middle finger, index finger etc. Repeat each activity with eyes closed.
- Arms outstretched in front at shoulder height, one hand open palm down, one hand clenched fist, alternate clenched to open palm. Repeat with palm facing ceiling. Repeat each activity with eyes closed.
- Left arm outstretched to side at shoulder height. Right arm across chest and touching shoulder, alternate so that the right arm becomes outstretched and the left arm is across the chest and hand touching the shoulder. Keep looking straight ahead. Repeat each activity with eyes closed.
- Left arm outstretched in front at shoulder height with the index finger of the right hand touching the nose, alternate activity. Repeat with eyes closed.
- Touch the left ear with the left index finger and the tip of the nose with the right index finger. Then cross over with the right index finger touching the left ear and the left index finger touching the tip of the nose. Repeat several times and also with eyes closed.
- Touch the right ear with the right index finger and the tip of the nose with the left index finger. Then cross over with the left index finger touching the right ear and the right index finger touching the tip of the nose. Repeat several times and also with eyes closed.
- With both arms outstretched and index fingers pointing forwards, make a large figure of 8 with both arms moving in the same direction at the same time. Repeat several times and also with eyes closed.
- With feet together, jump forwards, backwards, and side to side with fluent movements. To increase difficulty, alternate the sequence. E.g., side to side, backwards and forwards. Repeat several times and also with eyes closed.
- Marching on the spot or whilst moving around a room are great for improving co-ordination, as are skipping and running. Include music with these activities to enforce timing and rhythm.

