



Maximum Potential



Pediatric OT, Physio & SLT

Specializing in Sensory Integration

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PLAY ACTIVITIES TO FACILITATE DEVELOPMENT

All activities should be done in a playful manner. The activities should have variety and spontaneity. These activities usually involve subskills that are difficult for the child. A child picks up and organizes a tremendous amount of sensory stimulation through play. They learn perceptual concepts by moving their bodies through space as well as relationships between themselves and objects, and objects to objects.

Try to spend at least one half hour three times per week on the type of activities recommended here. Never force a child. The activities are best performed, and you know the child is organizing the information, when they are having fun and at least partially successful in the task. The child needs to be actively involved in the activity - avoid "doing to the child", rather set up the activities/exercises so that the child can "do to himself/herself".

I. TACTILE

Have the child rub lotion on himself, starting with his stomach and working out to his arms and hands, legs, feet. Have him/her name the specific body part that he/she is rubbing. Encourage the child to experience a variety of different textures on his/her face, hands and feet

- silly mud
- finger painting
- play dough
- dried beans and peas
- sand
- pieces of materials
- different temperatures
- shaving cream/whipped cream
- “feelie box”

II. VESTIBULAR

Have the child do the following to himself, if possible:

- spin self in circles, both directions
- swinging - sitting and on stomach
- hammock swinging (using a blanket)
- rolling
- rocking
- scooter board (skate board on stomach)
- bouncing on therapy ball
- jogging trampoline activities

III. TRUNK

- sit-ups: vertical and diagonal
- trunk rotation activities on ball
- bouncing on a ball to increase muscle tone (hippity-hop)
- flexion activities: have child roll self up into a ball; tumbling activities

IV. BILATERAL COORDINATION: encourage interaction of the two sides of the body

- throwing or hitting a ball with two hands
- rhythm games
- gymnastic activities such as pull-ups
- tug-of-war

V. OCULAR CONTROL:

- throwing or hitting a target: balloons and balls
- hitting a ball with a bat
- activities on swings and slides provide a lot of movement while at the same time the child must remain visually oriented to the task.
Example: catch a ball while coming down a slide; throw a ball at a target while swinging.
- flashlight games - flashlight in hand
- flashlight on top of head (miners light)

VI. CROSSING MIDLINE

- throwing balls/bean bags while standing sideways to the target
- Simon Says games where child has to copy many positions where the arms or hands cross over the midline of their body
- Twister

VII. MOTOR PLANNING

- Have the child move through an obstacle course where he has to go over, under, around and on top of obstacles
- ladder games
- hand clapping patterns
- imitate animals: walk like a duck; a crab; a dog; etc.

VIII. UPPER EXTREMITY STRENGTHENING

- wheelbarrow walking on different height surfaces, over small obstacles, even up stairs. Support child at the hips if his/her belly "sinks" when held by the ankles.
- crab walking
- crab soccer
- push ups
- any activity where the child has to weight bear and weight shift over extended arms

IX. BALANCE

- balancing on one foot at a time - eyes open and eyes closed
- balance beam activities (use an 8 foot 2 x 4 that child can paint!)
- walking on masking tape (simulate balance beam) on floor
- walking around the rim of a large inner tube

X. PROPRIOCEPTION (awareness of joint position)

- push/pull games
- rough housing - wrestling
- tug-of-war (make a "rope" out of lycra material)
- hanging on a trapeze bar
- shoveling dirt/sand
- vacuuming
- add wrist/ankle weights to any activity for ten minutes, then remove and have child continue with activity
- body squeeze/hug machine

Once the child learns a movement or an activity, change it or reverse it to keep the child working. Have fun!