

Month 2: Trunk Control Preschool Activities

Rock the Boat

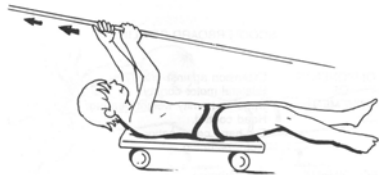
Have the child lie in prone (on his tummy). Lifting his arms and legs off the floor and rocking his body back and forth to the song “row, row, row your boat”.

Helicopter

Lay your child on her stomach. Show your child how to lift and stretch her head, arms and legs off the floor. Encourage her to imitate a helicopter’s propeller action by moving her hands and kicking her feet.

Bridge Crossing

To set up a bridge crossing, tie a rope or clothes line across the room just high enough that when the child lie on their back they can reach up and grab the rope. Have the child lie on their back on the scooter board. Then they will use the rope to pull themselves across the room.



Statues and Rag Dolls

Have children stand scattered around the activity area. At your signal show the children what it would be like to be a statue, and what it would be like to be a rag doll. To play the game have the students move around to music like rag dolls, when the music is paused they must freeze into statues.

Travelling Body Parts

Have the children sitting around the activity area. The idea is for the children to listen and place the body parts as instructed.

Present the following challenges:

- Put an elbow on the floor; take it as far away from the floor as you can.
- Stretch a foot far away from you and then bring it back without touching the floor
- Put a shoulder (the other shoulder; both shoulders) on the floor.
- Touch an elbow to a knee; take it as far away from that knee as possible.
- Touch an elbow to a foot; repeat with the other elbow and the other foot.
- Touch a wrist to an ankle; repeat with the other wrist and ankle.

Additional Challenges:

- Make one hand travel far away from the other one.
- Leaving the first hand (the one that travelled) where it is, bring the other hand to meet it.
- Make the first hand travel far away from the other one, but in a different direction.
- Make one elbow travel far away from the other one.
- Leaving the first elbow where it is, bring the other elbow to meet it.
- Make the first elbow travel far away again, but in a different direction.
- Do the same as above, but with the children sitting and moving first knees and then feet.
- Come up from the floor with your head leading and the rest of your body following.
- Go back down with an elbow leading the way.
- Come up from the floor with an elbow leading.
- Go back up with your nose leading.
- Go back down with your chest leading.
- Come back up with your chin leading.

Remember to model the actions for the children.

Body Balance

Have the children scattered on a large mat or on several smaller mats; with enough space to move without interfering with one another. Challenge the students to place only the following body parts on the mat:

- hand and knees
- knees and elbows
- knees alone
- just the tummy
- the back
- one side of the body; the other
- just the bottom
- hands and feet
- just the feet

Explain to the children that only the body parts you tell them should be touching the floor. To make the game more challenging ask the children to count to see how long they can hold each position.

Bridges and Tunnels

Have the children scattered in the activity area. Teach the children first how to make themselves into a bridge (belly button up); and then how to make themselves tunnels (belly button toward the floor). So that the children learn the positions alternate calling out bridges and tunnels so the children are changing from one to the other.

Divide the group into two, with half the children being tunnels and the other half acting as cars or trains travelling under them. And don't forget to switch so all the children have a chance to be a "car".

Crabs and Seagulls

To start this game each child will need to learn how to walk like a crab. They will also need a personal beach which can be a small piece of carpet, a piece of paper, etc. The children will imagine they are crabs out for a day on the beach (children will crab walk around their personal beach). However a hungry seagull lurks nearby and the crabs must scurry home if the seagull flies too close. While the crabs are venturing from their spots have them:

- wave hello to a friend
- reach to the sky with a foot
- put on sunscreen
- jump the waves
- dig for sea shells
- dry off with a towel

While they are venturing out periodically call out “SEAGULL!” and the crabs must scurry back to their spot and sit still until the seagull flies away.

Spelling Push Ups

This activity can help a child learn to identify letters. However it can be easily be modified to each child’s learning level. Just modify wherever it says letters, place colour blocks, shape cut outs, numbers, etc.

Spread the letters on the floor or a mat in random order. Help the child lay prone (on their tummy) on a therapy ball. The child should be able to touch the floor. Instruct the child to use his hands and reach out to grab one letter at a time, then to walk back and place the letter in front of them (or to match the letter).

Scooting Pegs

Use a container with a lid and poke a small hole in the middle of the lid. Place the container on one side of the room. Hide 10 pegs in theraputty and place the theraputty on the other side of the room. Instruct the child to look for the hidden pegs in the theraputty and pull them out one at a time. Every time the child finds a peg, instruct him to lie on his tummy on the scooter board and propel himself to the other side of the room using his hands (make sure his legs are bent and the knees are not touching the floor). Once the child reaches the container, instruct the child to push the peg he found into the container through the hole in the middle of the lid.

Frozen Zoo

Before you begin this game go through all the different ways you can walk like an animal (see attached handout). The children can then pick their favourite animal to be. Start the music and have the children walk around the room as their chosen animal. When the music stops they must ‘Freeze’ and try and hold as long as they can.

Yoga Poses for Trunk Stability * Adapted From Yoga Kit for Kids by Imaginazium

Cat

- Start from hands and knees. Hands should be directly under shoulders, knees under hips.
- Spread fingers wide and point them straight ahead.
- Keeping arms straight, press down through hands into floor and exhale as you round back as much as possible and look at your bellybutton.
- On the inhale, arch your back, look up and reach one leg behind you. Imagine you are a cat stretching all the way through your tail.
- Repeat with the other leg stretching back.
- Do as many times as feels good.

*From all fours
I round my spine
So I can see my tummy
Then with a stretch
I arch myself
It makes my back
feel yummy.*

Turtle

- Sit with soles of feet pressed together so that legs form a diamond shape.
- Touch elbows together in front of chest.
- Then bending forward bring elbows down toward the floor between knees.
- Slide forearms under legs and rest hands on floor palms down.
- Round over and, if possible, rest forehead on feet.
- Pull head in and down when IN your shell and reach head out and up when peeking OUT of your shell.

*I hook my arms under my knees
And rest them on the floor
I round my back to form my shell
And peek out of the door.*

Mountain

- Stand with feet and ankles together.
- Press down into the floor through while foot and let top of head rise toward the ceiling.
- Eyes rest on one point at eye level. Lengthen back of neck.
- Chin draws down and in slightly as chest lifts and shoulders widen.
- Arms and hands reach down gently touching sides of body.
- Head, shoulders, ribcage and hips should all be aligned.
- Hold for 3-6 breaths.

*Head, shoulders,
Hips and feet
All aligned
with my heartbeat
Rooted down yet rising tall
I'm a mountain,
big or small.*

Tree

- Stand with feet parallel and together or just a few inches apart.
- Imagine being a tree. Grow long roots out of the bottom of your feet and let your body extend very tall.
- Check to feel if your feet, hips, shoulders and head are all lined up like the trunk of a tree.
- Press the palms of your hands together in front of your chest and find something at eye level to focus on. Without moving your gaze, shift weight to one foot.
- Lift the other foot on top of the standing foot or to the knee or inner thigh of the standing leg.
- Press the sole of the foot into standing leg while pressing down through the standing leg into the floor to help you balance.
- Feel as though you continue to grow. If your balance is steady, lift your hands above your head and open them like the branches of a tree.
- Breathe and hold as long as is comfortable. Do the other side.

*When I send my roots down deep
I let myself grow tall
I focus on a single point
I hold my center strong
Then I can balance on one leg
And stretch my limbs out long.*

Bridge

- Lie on your back with arms resting at your sides. Place soles of feet on the floor hip distance apart about 6" from buttocks.
- Press hips and back off the floor as high as you can by pressing into feet. Shoulders remain on the floor.
- Roll shoulders back and tuck them under you. Wriggle arms close together underneath you and interlace fingers.
- Press into arms as well as feet for a deeper back bend.
- Relax neck and face and keep head in the centre facing ceiling.
- Hold pose for 3-8 breaths and then lower slowly.

*From on my back
Knees bent, feet down
I press my hips
Up from the ground.
My hands meet underneath of me
So I arch even higher – see!*

Table

- From a seated position, place hands on floor about 6" behind you.
- Place soles of feet directly in front of hips about 8-12" in front of you.
- On an exhale, press into hands and feet and lift torso parallel to floor.
- Hands should be under shoulders and ankles should be under knees.
- Eyes can look at feet, the ceiling or back behind you depending upon what feels comfortable for your neck.
- Hold pose and breathe in and out 3-6 times before gently lowering yourself back to sitting.

*With soles and palms upon the floor
My calves and arms are legs
Off of the ground I press my seat*

Shark

- Lay on floor on tummy, legs straight and together.
- Roll shoulders back and reach arms behind you. Clasp hands and interlace fingers behind back.
- Reach clasped hands up and back toward feet.
- Lift head and chest as much as possible. Lift legs as well keeping them straight.
- Breathe 3-5 times and then lower slowly.

With my hands held tight

Big Ball Activities (adapted from *My Big Ball Book* by Shirley Sutton)

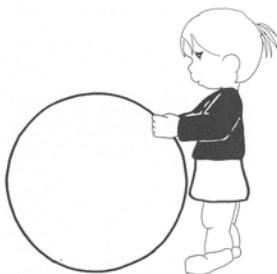
The following activities are used using a large ball, either a therapy (yoga) ball or a large beach ball that you could find at your local store just make sure for the activities that they are sitting on the ball that the ball is away from sharp objects and that it is designed to accept the weight of your child.

Knees on Ball



Place child on the top of the ball in a kneeling position. Hold the child with support around their chest. As the child (and you) becomes more comfortable decrease the amount of support you give them.

Push Big Ball



Have the child push the ball around outside. Up and down a hill. Make it a race and see who can make it across the yard first.

Sit on Ball



Have the child sit on the ball. If at first he needs support, provide support at his pelvis close to the ball so that his core is really working. Sing songs while seated on the ball. When the child gets comfortable and stable on the ball, remove your support and start challenging them to reach for toys, or complete action songs with swaying of arms or stomping of feet, i.e. If You're Happy and You know It.

Lie on Tummy and Throw Ball



Have the child lie on his tummy. Using a slightly smaller ball then with the above activities play catch by rolling the ball back and forth. Or set up a target on the wall so he has to roll and even throw the ball high in order to hit it.

Keep Away

Sit facing a partner, holding two hands on a big ball. Partner holds the ball as well. Play “keep away”, engaging in a Tug-of-War/Push-of-War activity. Focus on cross-legged posture with straight back (no slouching!). Try reaching from the sides as well.

Songs for Trunk Stability

Shake your body (have the children seated to complete this song)

Shake your foot

Shake, shake, shake, shake your foot

Now, shake your leg

Shake, shake, shake, shake your leg

Now shake your hand

Shake, shake, shake, shake your hand

Now shake your arm

Shake, shake, shake your arm

Now shake your head

Shake, shake, shake, shake your head

Now shake your body

Shake, shake, shake, shake your body

Action: as each body part is mentioned shake it.

Hello My Name is Joe

Hello my name is Joe, and I work in a button factory

One day my boss came to me and said “Hey Joe are you busy?”

And I said “No”

He said “Press this button with your....”

Actions: Press the button with your 1. arm, 2. arm, 3. leg, 4. leg, etc.

References:

CATCH Early Childhood Activity Box

www.otplan.com

www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com