

Pediatric Development Center



~ Newsletter ~ March 2010

We provide occupational therapy evaluation, treatment and consultation for children with developmental delays, autism/Asperger, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, sensory processing disorders, attention, behavioral concerns, handwriting, and other areas of weakness. Contact us for further information:
125 Presumpscot St. Portland, ME.
(207) 699-5531

Inclement Weather

Throughout the winter we will experience snow and ice. Our office is usually open unless the weather is extremely bad. It is unpredictable how the day will go, whether the roads will clear early or a storm will come in later. Your therapist or the office will contact you to determine the best route of action. It is very important that we have your current phone number, including a cell phone or other daytime phone number. In case of very severe weather we will list a clinic closing on WCSH 6. Also, please remember to call if your child is sick and will not be coming to the clinic.

20 Ways to Motor-Up Motivation

"Bright Ideas" from Integrations catalog

1. **Monkey Monday.**
Standing next to the desk, and without feet moving...we've all gone APE!
2. **Turn-Around Tuesday.**
Seated on the floor, lift legs, and using hands, make your body turn.
3. **Wiggly Wednesday.**
Stand, arms in air. Listen for which body part will get a "wiggle attack!" Keep the rest of your body still.
4. **Trampoline Thursday.**
Jump on your imaginary trampoline to the beat of a song, spelling words, or times tables.
5. **Flying Friday.** Lie on tummies. Lift arms and legs in the air like a butterfly. Soarrrrr!
6. **Muddy Monday.** On all fours, crawl in the pretend mud. Oh no! Pretend quicksand!
7. **Tip Toe Tuesday.** Tip toe around your desk with your hands on your hips. Reverse.
8. **Wheelbarrow Wednesday.**
Wheelbarrow walk on a chalk line on the floor.
9. **Thursday "Trees."**
Yoga-ercise the kids with "tree" position. Palms together over the head, with foot resting on the opposite thigh. Ommmm.
10. **Flashy Friday.** Turn off the lights. Use pointer finger to follow the flashlight dot.
11. **Mash-It-Up Monday.**
Using exaggerated stomps, "mash" the potatoes. Slow and FAST!
12. **Tug-An-Arm Tuesday.**
Hold hands, and raise to shoulder level. Pull! PUSH!
13. **Windmill Wednesday.**
Stand tall. Windmill your arms forward, then backwards.
14. **Hot Tamale Thursdays.**
"Tamales" roll slowly on the floor. Suddenly...it becomes hot, hot, hot!
15. **Friday Frogs.** Frog jump down a chalk line. Then, play leap frog.
16. **Monday Marble Roll.**
Lie on tummy in a circle. Roll a marble to a friend.
17. **Tuesday Twists.** With arms like an airplane, twist your body ten times.
18. **Wake-Up Wednesday.**
Start at the feet, and briskly "wake-up" each body part by rubbing with both hands.
19. **Tangled-Up Thursday.**
Sitting or standing, make your body into a twisted tangle. Untwist slowly.
20. **Friday Freezicles.** While the music plays there's funky dancing. When it stops-FREEZE.



Getting Down To The "Core" of Activities

Deanna Macioce, MS, OTR/L

From yoga to exercise ball routines, core stability and balance is a major focus of many exercise and wellness programs. Having a strong core enables individuals to use their trunk, stomach and shoulder muscles with ease while improving overall posture. In addition, it helps improve a person's balance, thus improving coordination throughout the whole body. A strong core is crucial for everyone, but very often our children with sensory processing concerns demonstrate poor core stability despite their overall muscle strength. This not only affect gross motor, but fine motor skills as well. So, how do we find ways for our children to increase their core stability without the use of adult focus exercise programs? This month we are going to focus on how to strengthen the core while stuck inside with and without equipment during these winter months.

While the weather makes it difficult to partake in outside activities that are beneficial

for core strengthening, there are many ways to make your inside play activities beneficial for your child. Dust off the exercise ball and make the most of your child's television time by allowing him to sit on the ball promoting the use of core muscles for balance. Challenge her to sit with her feet flat on the floor and a straight spine during the entire commercial break. Have him sit with his arms stretched out and feet off the floor as you provide distal support at the hands allowing the trunk muscles to keep the body balanced. The exercise ball is also a great way to change up activities such as puzzles, Mr. Potato Head, or block building. Have the child lie on his back on the ball and while inverted reach for pieces. The child then has to use her abdominal muscles to pull herself up to a sitting position and place the piece. You can also challenge the child without the ball by encouraging long sitting (legs straight out in front and not using hands for support) during games, homework and even television time. Encourage a straight back and legs as flat as possible. Set mini challenges to increase the amount of time he or she can hold the position.

A variety of games can be played to help achieve core strengthening, including Twister and doing the Limbo.

Simon Says is also a great way to encourage yoga poses or one foot standing. And we cannot forget to highlight the benefit of the Nintendo Wii Fit for increasing overall core and stability. Be creative and set up obstacle courses that encourage crawling on all fours over pillows and couch cushions. For your smaller kiddos, have them sit up on a large blanket and pull them along for a ride, having them working to keep their bodies upright.

Focusing on the core is a key factor in any therapy treatment and development, but is often overlooked. So, whether you are a parent, teacher or therapist, make it a New Year's Resolution to increase your focus on your children's core. Here are just a few ways to help you along. Once you have a strong core, so many other skills will fall into place!



Good Resources:

www.southpawenterprises.com

www.integrationscatalog.com