

Pediatric Development Center



~ Newsletter ~
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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

Good Resources:

<http://valeriedejean.org/uno12.html>

<http://staff.fcps.net/rcooper/coordination.htm>

Activities for Home Use

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Motor Planning: Motor planning, or praxis, is the ability to perform a new or skilled motor task, and is dependent upon adequate body awareness, tactile feedback, ideation, initiation, timing, sequencing, feedback and feedforward. It is how quickly we learn a motor skill and the ability to generalize it to other situations. A weakness with motor planning impacts the ability to think of what to do and a child may need to copy or imitate someone. A deficit will cause a child to have difficulty remembering what to do and how to do it, in that they may be able to tie their shoes one day, but not even know where to begin the next day. Motor planning involves sequencing motor actions together such as necessary with dancing and playing the piano. And a child needs to be able to adequately learn from feedback of information to their body how to then feedforward and produce the action better the next time they try it. A child with motor planning difficulties may often act out or attempt to avoid motor tasks to protect themselves from a sense of failure.

To improve motor planning it is necessary to address the underlying processing of body awareness, touch perception and discrimination and organization. It will be important to break the steps of a task to manageable segments, and allow them to master each

comfortably and then chain them together. Some children may learn better from a visual demonstration where other may do better with auditory directions, and it will be important to determine which method is more successful for each child.

- Obstacle courses of swinging, jumping, climbing, crawling
- Swinging from a trapeze bar to land in a stack of inner tubes, gradually increasing the distance away of the tubes and the number of tubes in the stack
- Jumping jacks: start with just the legs jumping in/out, then add the arms up and down, coordinating them with the legs
- Jump rope: start by jumping over the rope when still on the ground, two feet together, side to side. Then jump over it as it is slowly moved back and forth. Next jump over the rope as it is swung over the head and stopped at the feet. Eventually speed up the rope until it is continuously moving over the child's head. Once there is confidence with the rope being swung for the child, have the child learn to swing the rope and coordinate the hands and feet.

Bilateral Coordination: This involves using the two sides of the body together in a coordinated manner, use of legs together and of arms and hands together, as well as arms and legs together. Initially

children use the hand which is closer to the object or task they want, and eventually develop improved coordination and skill with both hands together.

- Bike riding
- Jump rope
- Jumping Jacks
- Hop scotch
- Soccer
- Toss and catch with large balls requiring two hands
- Baseball tossing and catching
- Frisbee with large (30") fabric covered hoop, "Beamo"
- Zoom Ball (football moved along string held with 2 hands)
- Dancing
- Climbing a ladder or rope ladder
- Pop beads, large and small
- Tearing paper
- Rolling out clay with a rolling pin
- Clapping and hand movement games (patty cake, Wheels on the Bus)
- Cutting with scissors
- Building of models
- Craft kits
- Stringing beads
- Construction toys with nuts and bolts
- Snap together plastic block sets
- Holding a stencil while tracing
- Etch-A-Sketch
- Dressing and undressing dolls
- Knitting
- Wind up toys

- Use of tools where one hand stabilizes and one works

Crossing the Midline: As the child matures, develops a dominance and efficient processing of the two sides of the body the ability emerges to cross the midline of the body.

- Reaching across the body for objects or toys
- Fishing for magnetic fish with the pole in the dominant hand and fish placed on the non-dominant side
- Tossing bean bags or balls at targets or in containers, on the non-dominant side of the body
- Placing puzzle pieces or game pieces on the non-dominant side and using the dominant hand to obtain
- Using a "noodle" or bat, hit at suspended balls
- Alternate toe touches
- Cross-crawl pattern of touching opposite elbows and knees
- Frisbee
- Beamo (large hoop with lycra for tossing)
- Tetherball



Balance: Balance results from adequate processing of movement and an inner sense of stability. To improve balance it is necessary to improve the underlying issues of vestibular processing. Activities rich in movement and joint compression/traction will be important in the development of balance.

- Walking on a balance beam. The width and height of the beam can be adjusted depending on the age and ability of the child. Use of 2x4's and other planks can be used. Include an activity while walking across the beam for older children, such as a noodle to hit at suspended balloon, keeping a balloon in the air, fishing with a magnetic pole to either side, etc.
- Walk on the tops of tires or inner tubes
- Walk on the rungs of a ladder placed on the ground
- Walk on the tops of inverted bowls
- Walk along rocks at the beach or a stone wall
- Walk on balance beam or planks on the ground or slightly raised
- Sit on an exercise ball or T stool, while doing a task
- Sit or stand on a rocker board or table while engaged with a task such as ball toss
- Po-go Stick or ball
- Bungee jumper (dense foam block with a rubber

tube and handle to jump
on like a po-go stick for
younger children)

- Romper stompers
(walking on cans or blocks
while pulling up on string
handle)