

Sponge Ball Activities to Develop 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.

Sponge Ball Activities

- Put your left arm outstretched in front of you at shoulder height with your palm facing upwards. Place the ball into your open palm and squeeze as hard as you can for 10 seconds and relax. Repeat 5 times.
- Put your right arm outstretched in front of you at shoulder height with your palm facing upwards. Place the ball into your open palm and squeeze as hard as you can for 10 seconds and relax. Repeat 5 times.
- Put your left arm outstretched in front of you at shoulder height with your palm facing downwards. Place the ball into your palm and squeeze as hard as you can for 10 seconds and relax. Repeat 5 times.
- Put your right arm outstretched in front of you at shoulder height with your palm facing downwards. Place the ball into your palm and squeeze as hard as you can for 10 seconds and relax. Repeat 5 times.
- Put both arms outstretched in front of you at shoulder height and clasp the ball between both palms. Interlock fingers and squeeze the ball as hard as you can for 10 seconds, then relax. Repeat 5 times.
- Sit on the floor, knees bent and arms behind you for support. Place the ball between your feet and grasp it. Raise your legs whilst still holding the ball for 5 seconds and relax. Repeat 5 times.
- Sit on the floor, knees bent and arms behind you for support. Place the ball between your knees, grasp it as hard as you can and shuffle 1 metre forwards keeping the ball between your knees. Repeat 3 times.
- Do a variety of throwing and catching activities. Start by using both hands together, then your left hand and then your right hand. Increase the difficulty by introducing partner activities, varying distances, and objects to throw through and into using both over arm and under arm.

