

Tummy Time, Barefoot Walking and Balance



Tummy time – not just for babies!

These skills are still important to develop while your child is growing up in the Early Years! By developing their core muscles, children are able to refine their gross and fine motor skills!

Activities to try: crawling through tunnels, log rolling, playing whilst lying on their tummies.



Benefits of barefoot walking!

Feet are the most nerve-rich part of the human body. Exploring barefoot can help the brain build neurological pathways through feeling different textures and surfaces. Feet can develop naturally without conforming to the shape of a shoe. Their feet and lower legs are strengthened, making them more agile and less prone to injury.

Try: barefoot sensory walks through different textures such as sand, dirt or grass.



Developing Life Skills

By supporting our children's physical development, we can help them develop life long skills that will help them throughout the chapters of their lives. From being ready for school, to developing a healthy lifestyle that will continue into adulthood.

In addition to the activities described in this leaflet, we can also help our children by encouraging their independence!

- Learning to dress and undress themselves.
- Putting their own coat on.
- Opening their own lunch box and food items.
- Carrying their own lunch tray.
- Using the bathroom independently.
- Washing and drying their hands.
- Putting on their own shoes.
- Taking risks and managing challenge.
- Learning about healthy choices.
- Noticing the effects of exercise on their bodies.



Physical Development



Look inside for information on why physical development is so important for your child and some activities to support their development!

Improves bone health and muscle strength



Reduces body fat and promotes healthy body composition



Opportunities for problem solving and memory functioning



Improves focus and concentration



Benefits of Physical Activity

There are so many important parts of physical development... Here are some benefits



Enhances fitness and heart health



Supports self-esteem and increases confidence



Increases happiness and better moods

Development of fine and gross motor skills



Increased opportunities for creative thinking



Vestibular
A sense of balance and spatial orientation. This helps children develop automatic actions.

Activities!

Obstacle courses
Musical statues

Swings
Slides

Climbing stairs
Balancing on one foot!



Extra senses!

Proprioception
A sense of knowing where your body is in relation to external environment. This helps them better navigate obstacles and move!

Activities!

Hopping
Ball skills
Painting
Self-dressing
Dancing
Barefoot walking
Risky play
Construction play
Beanbag games



Posture and Sitting Positions

By adjusting the way a child sits we can help them strengthen their core and develop better posture leading to less spinal and joint problems in later life!

W-sitting

With knees bent and tucked under, bottom resting on the floor, this can be an easy way to play. However, it can cause stress to the hips and legs leading to 'pigeon toed' walking or back and pelvis pain as they grow. It also limits trunk rotation and core activation.

Instead try: sitting up with a straight back, side sitting on the floor, legs out in front on the floor or sitting on a low bench or stool.



Ditch the crossed legs

Sitting crossed legged with a straight back is not a comfortable position and requires concentration to sit in this position rather than listen to what is going on. Children can engage better when they are comfortable.

Instead try: standing, lying on tummy (also good to develop core strength), legs out in front, giving children the choice on how to sit – helping them to self-regulate.



The skill of sitting in a chair

Learning to sit is a process! Are their feet grounded to help them balance? Otherwise they need to concentrate on staying upright. Have their core muscles developed for sitting? Have they developed **eye-tracking skills** to follow what is going on at the same time as managing to sit? Our eyes need to move too!

To develop eye muscles try: catching bubbles, scarves, balloons, jumping over a moving rope, catch and throw games, following the light of a torch!



Removing the chairs

At Hollywood Park Nursery, we removed the chairs from activities to allow children to develop their upper body skills, practice crossing the mid-line to reach for things.

