

Children's Occupational Therapy Service

Move and play 18 months - 2 years



By this age your child is becoming more adventurous both with how they move and how they act around people.

It is important to give them the opportunity to play in a variety of surroundings and groups of people. This will help them to learn more skills in different areas.

Let them try new things with your supervision. This will help them build upon the movement skills they already have and develop their self confidence.

The following games and activity ideas will help your child to further develop their confidence, strength and movement abilities in a fun way.

- Encourage children to get down onto the floor or sit at a table with you to play. Arts and craft and construction activities will help your child to develop different ways to use their hands.
- Encourage your child to enjoy 'messy play' with sand, water, paint and play dough by making patterns and pictures in these. This will help early writing skills.
- Play ball games such as rolling, throwing and kicking to help develop their strength, balance and coordination.
- Give your child lots of praise for attempting new activities/ more adventurous movements, even when their efforts are not a complete success.
- Take time to play outside in the garden or at the park with your child. Let them explore and do as much as they can safely by themselves. This helps them to build confidence and strength and learn what they can do with their own bodies.

- Playgrounds are good for encouraging more adventurous movements such as swinging, climbing, jumping and spinning.
- Soft play areas and ball pools are great for children to safely explore different ways of moving and taking risks, as well as help improve their balance and coordination skills.
- Encourage use of ride-on toys and tricycles to help develop the strength of their legs and help them learn to pedal later on.
- Kicking balls helps to develop balance on one leg.
- Practise singing action songs as this will help your child learn about their bodies.
- Pretend play such as dressing up will help them to learn to dress themselves and feeding dolls will help develop imagination and social skills.
- Take time out to sit and read with your child. This will help their visual and imagination skills.
- It is important that children of this age have the opportunity to mix with similar ages children) e.g. mother and baby/toddler groups) as they play alongside each other and copy one another, learning from each other as they do so.

- M** Make time and opportunity for play in a safe environment.
- O** Opportunity to play with other children allows copying/ learning of activities/ movements.
- V** Visit the playground to allow your child time and space to explore more adventurous movements including ball games.
- E** Encourage use of ride-on toys and tricycles. They are good fun.

P Paints and crayons will help your child learn how to use their hands and to develop their pencil skills. Play dough will help to strengthen their hands.

L Learning about their body can take place by playing with dolls and teddies and singing songs and rhymes to name body parts.

A Acting games and pretend play should be encouraged to help your child learn about their everyday surroundings and how to behave in an acceptable way.

Y You do not need expensive toys or play equipment. Big cardboard boxes are great fun to climb in and out of and to make dens with, encouraging use of their imagination.

A page of lined paper with 25 horizontal lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. The page has rounded corners and a thin purple border.

If you have any concerns or would like further information about your child's development, please contact your public health nurse (health visitor) or:

Children's Occupational Therapy Service

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