

Children's Occupational Therapy Service

Move and play 4 - 5 years



Your child will by now be much more aware of what they are good at and not so good at. They will be skilled at moving around and will be developing new skills all the time.

They need lots of time to practice new play and movement skills. School will be a new challenging experience that will offer lots of chances to learn new skills in many areas of play.

The following suggestions may be helpful in developing movement and functional abilities in this age group.

- Encourage your child to play outdoors and enjoy being in the fresh air. Visit the playground to enjoy the swings, slide and climbing frame or the park to have space to run and play.
- Obstacle courses can be great fun. Set up your own to challenge balance and co-ordination. Include walking along narrow benches, climbing steps, uneven surfaces, avoiding trip hazards, crawling through tunnels and jumping and landing safely from a height. Obstacle courses are also good for teaching the concepts of on, in, under, over and through.
- Climbing is an important skill, which should have been mastered by now. Opportunities to practice include steps and stairs, climbing frames, ropes, ladders and large apparatus.
- Practise jumping and hopping e.g. over things, on the spot or in different directions. Using a trampette and skipping ropes with supervision is great fun.
- Action songs are good for music and movement participation. Being active is fun.

- It is fun to play with a ball to practice throwing, catching and rolling. This will develop hand-eye co-ordination and the use of two hands.
- Activities such as threading beads onto a lace, unscrewing containers and cutting with scissors are important at this age.
- Dressing up is a fun game and can help to teach dressing/ undressing strategies. Any zips, poppers or buttons should be attempted as independently as possible.
- Washing and toileting should be monitored from a distance so that they can be attempted as independently as possible in a quiet, calm environment.
- 'Messy play' with paint, glue, play dough etc, should be encouraged as it helps to develop hand skills which will in turn make writing easier.



M Movement becomes more adventurous and challenging; climbing ladders and apparatus.

O Obstacle courses are great fun, providing opportunity to practice adventurous movement skills.

V Vary the games you play and the equipment you use; bat, ball, rope and hoops.

E Enjoy being active. Play outdoors with friends and family.

P Puzzles and board games are fun.

L Lacing games help with using two hands and prepare for shoe laces.

A Arts and crafts help with fine motor skills.

Y You can leave your child to play with toys on their own.

A sheet of lined paper with 20 horizontal lines, suitable for writing or drawing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page.

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

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