

Sample Pages from Therapeutic Play Activities for Children

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Therapeutic PLAY Activities for

10 Tips for Helping Children with Cerebral Palsy During Playtime

All children learn through play and exploration. Playtime helps children to develop fine motor, gross motor, cognitive, emotional and communication skills. Children with cerebral palsy also enjoy and learn through play but it may be more difficult for them to explore and interact with their environment due to motor skill delays. Here are some suggestions to help children with cerebral palsy during play time.

- 1 Provide an open, safe space for floor time.
- 2 If the child needs help to be positioned, vary different play time experiences. Positions supported sitting, all fours and supported.
- 3 Provide open-ended equipment that has a not challenging enough, or not related to sense of mastery in their motor play (Mar
- 4 Research shows that infants show a preference for higher levels of play when using preferred toys at home or classroom to increase the int
- 5 Children who are not yet crawling should be encouraged with preferred toys and people/peers near encourage movement. Musical play can
- 6 When playing with small objects that require fine motor skills, use a table with a stable trunk and secure base of sup
- 7 If necessary, provide adaptive equipment to facilitate active play and facilitate free movement.
- 8 Use simple, clear and concise directions to play game.
- 9 Be respectful and observant of a child's signals. Loud or busy may be overwhelming for some children with certain play objects.
- 10 Most of all, keep it fun. Children who enjoy play will play more!

References: (1) Martin, E. (2000). Developmentally appropriate Physical Education, 11(6), 5-8.; (2) Schneider, E. (2009). Longitudinal context. OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health, 29, 79-87.
These pages are not intended to provide medical advice or physician diagnostic or training purposes. Consult a therapist or physician regarding your child's individual needs.

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Shaving Cream Tracks



Shaving Cream Tracks facilitate:

- fine motor skills
- crossing midline
- tactile exploration

How to set up and play Shaving Cream Tracks

Place the plates in front of the child or one leg of a toy car in the shaving cream. Demonstrate the tracks.

Encourage the child to play with each toy car more involved hand. This set up requires the midline and reaching across the body to the c

If you are concerned about the child mouthing instead.

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Side Step Ball Drop



Side Step Ball Drop facilitates:

- standing
- side stepping
- reaching
- crossing midline
- trunk rotation
- wrist extension

Side Step Ball Drop uses these materials:

- recycled cardboard tubes
- tape
- balls (that fit inside the tubes)
- bench

How to make and play with the Side Stepping Ball Drop:

Tape the recycled cardboard tubes along the wall near the back of the bench. Place each tube far enough apart so the child has to side step to get to the next tube. Make sure the bottom of the tubes are on top of the bench. This will prevent the balls from rolling away and encourage your child to keep his/her focus on the activity. Place the bowl of balls or one ball near the first tube. The child can pick up a ball and place it inside a tube. Encourage your child to take turns with the left and right hands when picking up a ball. When the child side steps to the next tube, refill the bowl with new balls and place the bowl on the other side of the child. For example, in the picture the bowl is to the right of the child. When the child moves to the next tube, place the bowl to the left of the child.

If needed, place your hands at the child's hips to provide a key point of control to assist with standing or squatting.

Modifications: If you do not have a bench, try using a large cardboard box. If you want to work on strengthening the hip muscles, try the activity in tall kneeling.

Parent Tip: Your child may be so eager to participate causing the legs to go in different directions. Even if the child just picks up the balls and throws across the room it is still side stepping practice.

Adult supervision required for all activities.

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10 Tips for Helping Children with Cerebral Palsy During Playtime

All children learn through play and exploration. Playtime helps children to develop fine motor, gross motor, cognitive, emotional and communication skills. Children with cerebral palsy also enjoy and learn through play but it may be more difficult for them to explore and interact with their environment due to motor skill delays. Here are some suggestions to help children with cerebral palsy during play time.

- 1** Provide an open, safe space for floor time for the child to explore.
- 2** If the child needs help to be positioned, vary the positions that you place the child in for different play time experiences. Positions could include the stomach, back, sidelying, supported sitting, all fours and supported standing.
- 3** Provide open-ended equipment that has many uses. Play equipment that is too challenging, not challenging enough, or not related to children's play interests will not help them develop a sense of mastery in their motor play (Martin, 2000).
- 4** Research shows that infants show a preference for certain kinds of toys and will display higher levels of play when using preferred toys. If necessary, change the selection of toys in the home or classroom to increase the interest of the baby or child (Schneider, 2009).
- 5** Children who are not yet crawling should spend play time on their stomachs on the floor with preferred toys and people/peers near them but maybe slightly out of reach to encourage movement. Musical play can encourage children to move.
- 6** When playing with small objects that require fine motor skills, the child should be positioned with a stable trunk and secure base of support to allow for wrist and hand movements.
- 7** If necessary, provide adaptive equipment for children with physical disabilities to engage in active play and facilitate free movement.
- 8** Use simple, clear and concise directions when explaining how to play with an object or game.
- 9** Be respectful and observant of a child's sensory preferences. Environments that are too loud or busy may be overwhelming for some children. Some children may dislike touching certain play objects.
- 10** Most of all, keep it fun. Children who enjoy playtime will be motivated to play and learn even more!

References: (1) Martin, E. (2000). Developmentally appropriate equipment: What does that mean? *Teaching Elementary Physical Education*, 11(6), 5-8.; (2) Schneider, E. (2009). Longitudinal observations of infants' object play behavior in the home context. *OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health*, 29, 79-87.

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Shaving Cream Tracks



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- fine motor skills
- crossing midline
- tactile exploration

Shaving Cream Tracks uses these materials:

- shaving cream
- plates
- toy cars

How to set up and play Shaving Cream Tracks:

Place the plates in front of the child or one large tray. Squirt shaving cream on each tray. Put a toy car in the shaving cream. Demonstrate driving one toy car in the shaving cream leaving tracks.

Encourage the child to play with each toy car as they are positioned in the picture using the more involved hand. This set up requires the child to reach in all different directions such as midline and reaching across the body to the other side (crossing midline).

If you are concerned about the child mouthing the shaving cream try whipped cream or flour instead.

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