



**Northumbria Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Movement matters

Issued by children's occupational therapy

building a caring future

HOSPITAL | COMMUNITY | HOME

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

## Contact us

You can contact us Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5.00pm. Please choose the team according to where you live.

### Northumberland

Children's Physical Disability Occupational Therapy Service  
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust  
Child Health  
Woodhorn Lane  
Ashington  
NE63 9JJ  
Tel: 01670 564 050

### North Tyneside

Children's Occupational Therapy Service  
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust  
Riverside Centre  
Minton Lane  
North Shields  
Tyne & Wear  
NE29 6DQ  
Tel: 0191 6434160

Alternatively, you can visit our website:

<https://www.northumbria.nhs.uk/our-services/childrens-services/childrens-occupational-therapy/>

Movement is an important part of a child's development as it forms the foundations for all areas of learning. Regular access to gross motor (larger muscles) activities will help your child to develop; strength, control, coordination, attention and concentration, whilst also increasing their confidence.

This pack provides a few suggested activities that you can do with your child to develop their gross motor skills, they should be challenging, but above all they need to be engaging and fun, so don't worry if they don't want to do all the activities, little and often is key.



## Indoor play

- Dance off - take turns with your child to create a fun move or dance that the other person has to copy. You can move to their favourite music to make it more fun and motivating.
- Charades - write down various things on pieces of paper (such as animals or characters they may know). Take turns picking a piece of paper and acting out what is written for the other person to guess.
- Switch it up - play a game where you each take turns thinking of ways to use different items. For example, take a fork and see how many ways you can use it (eating, brushing hair, etc.). Be creative with it and act out each different idea for added humour.
- Treasure hunt game - have your child hide treasure around the house, then draw you a treasure map of where to find it. If they are unable to write/draw yet, have them give you clues to find the items. The clues can be where to find the items (i.e. under something blue) or how to move your body to get there (i.e. take five steps forward then bend down).
- Floor is lava – pretend the floor is lava and have your child try to figure out how to cross from one area in your home to another (for example from one sofa to another). Use items from around the room to build a way across, such as pillows, chairs, paper. Once they master it, encourage them to move from one room to another.
- Moving from one place to another - walking carrying heavy items (books, box of Lego, pushing a weighted down buggy or play shopping trolley, animal walks, hopping, jumping, skipping, wheelbarrow walks, sack jumping using a pillowcase).

- Create obstacle courses with household objects - making the obstacle course can be just as beneficial as completing it, try to incorporate obstacles that will need to be crawled under or over, rolling, jumping etc.
- Water play in the bath / shower – filling containers with spoons / turkey baster / medicine syringes / squirty toys etc. pouring, squeezing the water out of wet sponges and face cloths (using hands and feet).
- Push-ups - over the edge of the sofa, bed, from a four-point kneeling position, with hips supported over a therapy balls, when your child is confident and develops the upper body strength, they can then try a push up with just their toes and hands touching the floor.
- Push offs - facing a wall, place hands on the wall at shoulder height, take step back and push into the wall, like you would a push up.



## Outdoor play

- Moving from one place to another - skipping with a rope, bouncing on a space hopper, sitting / lying on a skateboard and pulling self along with hands, scooter, bike, pogo stick.
- Bouncing on a trampoline / trampette or mattress – jumping up and down is enough, but you can also play games such as Simon says, give your child sequences of movements to do; 1 star jump, 2 jumps, 3 jumps etc. throw and catch a ball.
- Playing in sand / garden - filling buckets with sand / soil and carrying them from one place to another, digging, raking, watering the plants / grass using a jug or watering can.
- Playgrounds - use as much of the equipment as possible, swings, climbing frames, slides, set your child mini challenges to see how high they can go or how many times they can swing, hang and swing on the monkey bars they need some help with this, where possible and safe to do so help them hang upside down.



- Target practice - practicing throwing at a target is a great way for kids to learn how to coordinate their eyes with the movement of their body. It helps to enhance the pacing, timing and rhythm of actions. Start with them standing still and close to the target. As they get better at this skill they can move further away and even start to throw while their body is moving (such as on a swing or while they are walking). Below are some gameplay ideas for this:
  - Be Robin Hood or Cupid - using a child's bow and arrow set pretend they are an archer. Pretend you are Robin Hood and shoot arrows to defeat the bad guys (stuffed animals). Or pretend you are Cupid and shoot arrows at various stuffed animals to make them fall in love.
  - Be a dragon, throwing fireballs at the village - have your child create buildings using lego or old cardboard boxes etc place scatter them around outside, then use a soft ball as the fireball, throwing it at one building at a time to destroy the city.
  - Nerf guns – stand up some used food tins / drink cans on a table edge and shoot at the them until they fall down, position coloured targets or objects around a room and have your child plan which order they're going to shoot at them in and have them follow their own sequence.
- Ninja training - have your child create a ninja warrior course (outside or around the house). Start with a shorter course (three parts or components). As they get better at creating them challenge them to make them longer and more complex. It may be helpful to have them draw or write out their idea first so they have a solidified idea of what the steps are and in what order.

## Learning to ride a bike

British cycling have created an online resource hub that covers all aspects of teaching your child to ride a bike in fun easy to follow short videos. <https://www.readysetrider.co.uk>



## Leisure activities and clubs

There are so many local clubs and organisations within our communities that will be of great benefit to your child, they will be able to support your child, even if they find gross motor activities challenging. Here's a list of the types of clubs that you may wish to consider.

- Climbing walls – we have many in our area, that offer different things, it's worth searching on line.
- Leisure centre's – many offer activities ranging in activities from badminton, roller-skating, trampolining etc. A number also have soft play facilities. It's worth visiting the council website of going to your nearest to find out what they have to offer.
- Parks – look on the council website for information about local parks near you, many now have outdoor gyms, skate parks, water play as well as playground equipment. A number of councils run activities during the holidays too.
- Scouts and guides, these are suitable for children aged 6 years, they offer a range of activities, visit their websites for further details on a group local to you.

- Sports specific clubs – we would encourage you explore different sports with your child, watch them on TV / Internet to see what they're interested in, many clubs offer taster sessions and the opportunity for you to go and see them. Examples of clubs run locally include: basketball, climbing, cycling, hockey, horse riding, gymnastics, football, rugby, netball, martial arts, surfing, swimming, tennis, weightlifting, yoga etc.
- Soft play – there are so many to choose from in our area, ranging in size and suitability for different ages.
- Swimming – our local pools offer discounted swim sessions for residents, some free swims for children during the holidays. They also offer swimming lessons and inflatable play sessions.



## Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118.

## Other sources of information

### NHS 111

### NHS Choices

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

### NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Text: 07815 500015

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries 03 44 811 8111

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

PIN 947/V1

Review date: October 2023

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