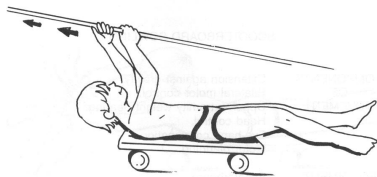


Month 3: Upper Extremity Strength and Stability School Age Activities

Bridge Crossing

To set up a bridge crossing, tie a rope or clothes line across the room just high enough that when the child lie on their back they can reach up and grab the rope. Have the child lie on their back on the scooter board. Then they will use the rope to pull themselves across the room.



Push-Ups

Your child should be able to imitate your body when shown a push-up from the knees. Child places knees and lower legs on the floor and extends arms down to the floor at shoulder level. Tell your child that their body is a bridge and they can not let it fall into the water (down to the floor). Tell your child to bend their elbows to lower the bridge and then slowly push back to raise the bridge once again. How many times can your child lower and raise the bridge?

Sitting Push-ups

Sit cross-legged on the floor, put arms at sides with hands flat on the floor and push through arms to lift bottom off the floor.

Wall Push-ups

Have the children stand facing the wall with feet about two feet from the wall. Put open hands on wall at shoulder height. Slowly flex and extend elbows.

Static Wheelbarrow

Have the child use a small box or solid chair to support the lower part of the body. Push up with arms so that they are straight (elbows not locked) and directly below elbows. Encourage lifting one hand up to complete a simple activity (sorting, colouring on the walls, etc.). Initially do one thing with one hand and then alternate.

Dynamic (moving) Wheelbarrow

Support the lower part of your child's body at the hips. Child then weight bears through their arms and when comfortable walk forward. Encourage lifting one hand up to complete a simple activity (picking up small toys, colouring, etc.).

Hanging and Swinging

On the playground, if available, use the monkey bars. Have the child hold onto the bars "hanging", supporting his/her waist. Pretend that he/she is a monkey and have him/her swinging back and forth transitioning between either arm like a "monkey". As your child's strength and confidence improve, reduce the amount of support you are providing, until your child is hanging all on his own.

Crab Walk Relay

Feeling crabby? Start walking!!

Game is for any number of players, and should be played in an open area on a safe surface. A bean bag and an object to distinguish the endpoint are needed for materials. The crab walk is using both hands and feet in a supine position (tummy to sky) to move. The bimanual oscillation will give both arms and legs a significant workout. The "racing" atmosphere will motivate the participants to push themselves.

1. Form two teams;
2. First two players get into the crab walk position and place a beanbag on their stomachs;
3. On the word "Go!" the two players will walk forwards with the bean bag on their stomach from the starting line to a designated end point. (5-20 meters away depending on group);
4. The bean bag must be dropped off at the endpoint line.
5. The crab walkers will race back backwards to the start line allowing the next player on his/her team to go.

Frozen Zoo

Before you begin this game go through all the different ways you can walk like an animal (see attached handout). The children can then pick their favourite animal to be. Start the music and have the children walk around the room as their chosen animal. When the music stops they must 'Freeze' and try and hold as long as they can.

Parachute Games

You do not need a parachute to play these types of games – you can use an old sheet that you allowed your child to paint or decorate with markers one rainy day! Have your child and a few friends stand at intervals along the parachute to engage in any number of

parachute games. The longer the children have to keep the parachute moving in the air, the longer they are working their arms and shoulders – have fun!

Let's Make Waves

Have the children stand around the parachute; holding it with two hands, at waist height, and facing it. Get the children to start making small up-and-down hand motions that cause little ripples. Gradually, the ripples (hand and arm movements) get larger and larger until they're huge ocean waves.

Challenges:

1. Have the children experiment with making ripples and waves while kneeling and sitting. Which one is easiest? Which is hardest?
2. Add music to the activity and have the children make big slow waves on the slow beat and small fast waves when the beat speeds up.

The Snowstorm

Have the children stand around the parachute; holding it with two hands, at waist height and facing it. Place Styrofoam peanuts or yarn balls on the parachute to make the "snow". Challenge the children to move it up and down in little waves creating a "snowstorm", and working together to keep all the "flakes" from falling off the parachute. Have the students count the number of times they can move the parachute up and down without any of the snowflakes falling off. Provide a starting signal – "The snow is falling!" and a stop signal – "The sun is shining!"

Parachute Man Says

Have the children stand around the parachute, holding with two hands at waist height. Play the game similar to "Simon Says". Issue a variety of commands, beginning each sentence with "Parachute Man Says..."

Some possible commands include:

- Shake the parachute
- Freeze!
- Raise the chute high
- Lower the chute to the floor
- Make waves
- Bring the chute to your knees (head, shoulders, tummy, etc.)
- Make ripples
- Walk toward the centre
- Walk back out

Letter Search

This game can be played at all skill levels by substituting letters, for numbers, or colours, or shapes, etc. Make sure you have one of each variable (letter, colour, etc.) for the children. Place the letters on the walls and floor throughout the room. The children are scattered throughout the room. Instruct the children to lie on their tummies on scooter boards or to walk like an animal (bear, crab, donkey, etc.). Start the music and have the children move around the room the way you have chosen. When the music stops, call out the sound or the name of a letter (colour, shape, etc.) and the children are to move closer

to that letter and point to it. To make it easier remember to only work on 2-3 letters each time you do this activity.

Bridges and Tunnels

Have the children scattered in the activity area. Teach the children first how to make themselves into a bridge (belly button up); and then how to make themselves tunnels (belly button toward the floor). So that the children learn the positions alternate calling out bridges and tunnels so the children are changing from one to the other.

Divide the group into two, with half the children being tunnels and the other half acting as cars or trains travelling under them. And don't forget to switch so all the children have a chance to be a "car".

Crabs and Seagulls

To start this game each child will need to learn how to walk like a crab. They will also need a personal beach which can be a small piece of carpet, a piece of paper, etc. The children will imagine they are crabs out for a day on the beach (children will crab walk around their personal beach). However a hungry seagull lurks nearby and the crabs must scurry home if the seagull flies too close. While the crabs are venturing from their spots have them:

- wave hello to a friend
- reach to the sky with a foot
- put on sunscreen
- jump the waves
- dig for sea shells
- dry off with a towel

While they are venturing out periodically call out "SEAGULL!" and the crabs must scurry back to their spot and sit still until the seagull flies away.

Creepy-Crawly

Have the children scattered throughout the play area. Explain the difference between crawling – on hands and knees, and creeping – on forearms and belly and hips on ground. Present the following challenges:

- creep (crawl) forward; backward
- creep (crawl) as slowly as possible
- creep (crawl) as quickly as possible
- creep (crawl) in a straight line
- creep (crawl) in a crooked line (different directions)
- creep (crawl) smoothly and quietly

Slither!

Have the children paired off and scattered throughout the play area. Have the children stretched out on their stomachs, one in front of the other. The child in the back takes hold of the ankles of the child in front, forming a two person "snake". The object is for the "snake" to see how far it can slither without breaking apart. Make sure the children switch position so they both get a chance to try hanging on. Once the children have mastered the challenge of slithering in pairs, invite the two-person snakes to connect with

other two-person snakes and to practice slithering as a four-person snake. Eventually, challenge the children to keep connecting until they've formed one big snake! And the ultimate challenge is to slither through a course you've created with cones.

Yoga Poses for Upper Extremity Strength and Stability * Adapted From *Yoga Kit for Kids*
by Imaginazium

Cat

- Start from hands and knees. Hands should be directly under shoulders, knees under hips.
- Spread fingers wide and point them straight ahead.
- Keeping arms straight, press down through hands into floor and exhale as you round back as much as possible and look at your bellybutton.
- On the inhale, arch your back, look up and reach one leg behind you. Imagine you are a cat stretching all the way through your tail.
- Repeat with the other leg stretching back.
- Do as many times as feels good.

*From all fours
I round my spine
So I can see my tummy
Then with a stretch
I arch myself
It makes my back
feel yummy.*

Dog

- Start from hands and knees.
- Hands should be directly under shoulders, knees under hips.
- Spread fingers wide and point them straight ahead. Curl toes under.
- Press down through hands and feet into floor and push hips as high up as possible.
- Let your head hang down so you can look at your legs.
- Lengthen your back and straighten your arms and legs.
- Reach heels toward the floor as you pull back and yawn just like a dog!
- Hold pose for 3-6 breaths and then lower back to hands and knees.

*I am dog
And when I yawn
I push into the ground
My tail goes up
My back gets long
My arms stretch straight
My head hangs down.*

Cobra

- Lay on floor on tummy, legs straight.
- Place palms of hands on floor close to and on either side of chest.
- Looking straight ahead, lift chest as high as possible.
- Shoulders should be wide and down away from ears.
- Then, arch and lift chest even higher by pressing down into hands.
- Keep elbows pinned into sides of body and pull chest forward and up. Neck should be long and chin parallel to floor.

*I press my hands
I lift my chest
I send a slither up my back
My shoulders wide
In kingly stance
Beware to all!
I might attack.*

Lion

- Start my kneeling on shins and resting chest onto thighs.
- Place forearms on the floor with elbows touching knees and look straight ahead.
- Be a lion in hiding, silent and still, preparing to pounce.
- When ready, spring ferociously forward onto hands and roar with mouth and eyes wide open.
- Press hands down into floor, arms straight and push chest forward. Make sure shoulders are down away from ears and that legs are extended straight out behind you.
- If not quite strong enough, adapt pose by resting hips on floor and bending elbows.

*I can hide
Silent and still
When I crouch down low
But when I pounce
I roar out loud
So everyone will know.*

Turtle

- Sit with soles of feet pressed together so that legs form a diamond shape.
- Touch elbows together in front of chest.
- Then bending forward bring elbows down toward the floor between knees.
- Slide forearms under legs and rest hands on floor palms down.
- Round over and, if possible, rest forehead on feet.
- Pull head in and down when IN your shell and reach head out and up when peeking OUT of your shell.

*I hook my arms under my knees
And rest them on the floor
I round my back to form my shell
And peek out of the door.*

Frog

- Squat with feet wide enough apart that heels can touch or are close to the ground.
- Arms come inside of knees, hands rest on floor shoulder distance apart.
- Use arms to help spread knees wide.
- Let hips drop low while back lengthens up, chest lifts and shoulders are wide.

*I am frog
I sit in squat
I wait for flies
That I can spot
Then I flick my tongue so fast
The fly is gone within a flash.*

Table

- From a seated position, place hands on floor about 6” behind you.
- Place soles of feet directly in front of hips about 8-12” in front of you.
- On an exhale, press into hands and feet and lift torso parallel to floor.
- Hands should be under shoulders and ankles should be under knees.
- Eyes can look at feet, the ceiling or back behind you depending upon what feels comfortable for your neck.
- Hold pose and breath in and out 3-6 times before gently lowering yourself back to sitting.

*With soles and palms upon the floor
My calves and arms are legs
Off of the ground I press my seat
So you can place a vase.*

Bug

- Squat with feet wide enough apart that heels can stay on or near the floor.
- Lift bottom to make room for arms to go in between legs and wrap around to the outside of ankles.
- Place palms of hands on the floor a little behind and to the outside of feet.
- Wriggle upper arms behind knees. Knees should bend over upper arms.
- Bend elbows and lower thighs down. Take weight into hands, lift feet off floor, one foot at a time and balance.
- Breathe and hold for as long as possible.

*When my hands crawl through my legs
And rest next to my feet
I can sit upon my arms
As if they were my seat.*

Big Ball Activities (adapted from *My Big Ball Book* by Shirley Sutton)

The following activities are used using a large ball, either a therapy (yoga) ball or a large beach ball that you could find at your local store.

Keep Away

Sit facing a partner, holding two hands on a big ball. Partner holds the ball as well. Play “keep away”, engaging in a Tug-of-War/Push-of-War activity. Focus on cross-legged posture with straight back (no slouching!). Try reaching from the sides as well.

Boxing

In a tall kneeling position, try “boxing” the therapy ball as it is held by an adult. The ball should be held at shoulder height and just far enough to get an almost totally extended arm when punching.

Scooter Board Obstacle Course

Have the child lie on his stomach on the scooter board. And using his hands and the strength of his arms to propel the scooter board between and around the obstacle course. For a challenge have the child place only his feet on the scooter board and again using his hand and arms to propel himself forward through the obstacle course.

Sit Down Volleyball

Have the class seated in a designated ball area in two groups facing each other. Have them sit on the floor and spread out evenly with enough room between players so they are able to freely swing their arms. Give the students a goal to play towards, it can be number of hits or length of time before the ball hits the ground. The goal of the game is that the players attempt to keep the ball in play by hitting the balls with their hands to keep all balls from touching the ground. Players must remain completely seated at all times. Begin with 1 beach ball and add more balls each game. Encourage students to control the beach ball or balloon.

Scatter and Freeze

Each student will need a scooter board for this activity. Students are to move around the gym in prone (on their stomachs) on the scooter. When the teacher says “freeze” they are to stop immediately. On “scatter” they are to begin moving again.

Scooter-Chute

You will need a parachute for this activity, as well as a number of scooters. Give every second/third person (depending on the size of your class) around the parachute a scooter. Have the students on the scooters lie down on their stomachs. The students holding on to the parachute raise it above their heads. The students on the scooters go into the centre (forwards) and come back out (backwards) before the parachute comes down. The students are not to pull on the parachute, they are just to let it float back down. Once they are back out, they pass the scooters to the right and the next group gets to go.

Ski Run

For this activity the child will need a scooter board and 2 toilet plungers purchased just for activities. The child will use the toilet plungers like ski poles to pull themselves around the floor while they ski cross-legged on the scooter boards. This is much more difficult than it sounds. A variation of the activity is to have them scoot to one side of the room, pick-up an object and bring it back, all the while “skiing” with plungers.

Stick Ball

To play the game of stick ball you will need beach balls, playground balls, sponge balls, rhythm sticks and paper towel tubes. Start by having the children lie on their stomachs in a circle on the floor. Give each child a stick and have him hold it with one hand on each end. Start the game by rolling the ball to a child. He hits the ball to a friend while keeping both hands on his stick. The children continue hitting the ball to each other, back and forth and around the circle. NOTE: Encourage the children to keep their legs straight, and their elbows off the floor. Try to hit the ball when both arms are completely extended.

Variation: Use a different type of ball each time you play stick ball.

Magic Carpet Ride

This is a great game to play in partners. You will need a magic carpet such as a blanket, a sheet, a throw rug, or an inflated inner tube with roped tied to it. Have the children play with a partner. One child sits on the magic carpet and her partner pulls her around for a ride. After a while they change places and the first child gets a ride and her partner pulls.

Variations:

1. Freeze: Play music while the children are doing this activity and have them switch places when the music stops.

Challenge Course: After the children have played several times in open areas, set up an obstacle course using chairs, boxes, and blocks.

Scooter Board Tug

To play scooter board tug each child will need a scooter board. The children will work in partners and will need a long scarf or piece of fabric. Each child sits on a scooter board facing the other one and holding onto opposite ends of a scarf. The children will pull toward each other by pulling hand over hand on the scarf until they meet, and then they give each other a “High-5!”

Variations: Lie Down and Pull: Have the children play Scooter board tug while lying on their stomachs.

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