

Month 2: Trunk Control Introduction

Objectives of this Month

1. Caregivers will learn the importance of developing core muscles
2. Caregivers will learn fun and easy ways of incorporating trunk control activities
3. Children will strengthen their core muscles and trunk control

Importance of Trunk Control

- Trunk control and core muscle strength stabilizes the body for other motor tasks, including eating, breathing, sitting, gross motor activities (such as walking and running), and handwriting
- Weak core muscles can lead to:
 - o other body parts compensating, resulting in inefficient movements (for example, a child may hike their shoulders when they are using scissors)
 - o the child rushing through activities, sacrificing the quality of the movements in order to complete the task
- Functional implications of poor trunk control include:
 - o poor endurance
 - o difficulty with self-regulation
 - o issues with breathing during movement

To understand the importance of a strong and stable trunk, think about a fishing rod. Imagine a rod made of rubber, and try casting a line; it simply wouldn't work. With a floppy rod you would not be able to control the line and hook. A child's trunk is like the fishing rod. A strong and steady trunk provides the base of support needed for delicate fine motor tasks like writing.

What Does a Weak Core Look Like?

- fidgeting
- clumsiness
- poor balance
- awkward walking and running
- excessive fatigue
- poor posture

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Developmental Expectations for Trunk and Core Development

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| 0-2 months: | Baby has head and trunk righting reactions Baby breathes with belly |
| 2-4 months: | Baby props up on elbows and holds head at 90 degrees Baby rolls from side to back, side to tummy, and back to side |
| 4-6 months: | Baby plays with feet while lying on back Baby sits with hands propped forward Baby has deeper breaths |
| 6-9 months: | Baby stands and bounces when held by both hands Baby creeps or crawls on all fours Baby sits independently with hands free for play Baby pulls to stand at a low table |
| 9-12 months: | Baby begins to creep and crawl up the stairs Many babies are standing independently at this time Baby breaths in more air at a slower rate |
| 12-15 months: | Child plays while squatting |
| 15-18 months: | Child seats self in small chair Child climbs stairs |
| 19-21 months: | Child climbs on, off, and over furniture |
| 31-36 months: | Child climbs ladders and slides on outdoor playground equipment with supervision only |
| 48 months: | Child stands on tiptoes Child hops on one foot Child climbs outdoor playground equipment independently Child capable of forward tumble |
| 60 months: | Child skips with alternating swing |

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