

Parry Sound District Best Start Network

Month 6: Stretch it Out and Balance

Toddler

Head, Shoulders Knees and Toes on a Dime

Cut out a circle from construction paper that is large enough for your child's feet.

Do one for yourself too!

Place the circle on the floor and sing "Head and Shoulders".

The object is to stay on the circle.

Kicking

Just having the toddlers practice their kicking helps improve their balance.

Moving Statues

Explain to the children what a statue is. Have the kids practice making themselves into statues. When they have the idea of what a statue is have the children walk around the room and when you call "freeze" the children form the statue pose. Have the children hold the pose for 5-10 seconds.

Stay in Place

You will need a circle or small mat for the child to stand on. Have the child move their bodies to music while keeping their feet on the circle. When the music stops they must "freeze" and hold their balance.

Bend & Stretch

"Bend and stretch,

Reach for the stars.

There goes Jupiter,

Here comes Mars.

Bend and stretch,

Reach for the stars.

Stand on your tip toes,

High, High, High."

Actions

Bend down, then stretch

Up high on tip toes

Sway body

Bend and reach

Reach up on your tip toes

Animal Limbo

You will need: a light weight pole at least 4 feet long, a foam pool noodle, or a jumping rope.

To set up the limbo course place two chairs approximately 3.5 feet apart (or wider depending on the length of your limbo stick). Lay the limbo stick over the two chairs. Use books or pillows to stack on the chairs to change the height of the limbo stick. To start you need a caller, someone who calls out the name of an animal. You could also place animal flashcards in a bucket and each child gets a turn to pick. All players one at a time, take turns going under the limbo stick while walking like the animal. The children may move in any way they choose to go under the limbo stick. Here are some examples:

1. Pony – Children gallop and duck under the limbo stick
2. Bear – Children walk on their hands and feet
3. Duck – Children squat and waddle.
4. Seal – Children lie on their tummies and use only their arms to pull themselves on the floor
5. Crab – With their tummy facing up, children move on their hands and feet

Variations:

1. Christmas Limbo – Gallop like reindeer, walk like a camel, etc.
2. Winter Animal Limbo – Walk like a penguin, a seal, a polar bear, a moose, etc.
3. Barnyard Limbo – Ducks, pigs, roosters, horses, and other farm animals waddle, prance and walk in different ways.
4. Seaside Limbo – Crabs, stingrays, sharks and sea turtles have their own unique ways to travel.

To work on balance with the toddler crowd, you need nothing more than a roll of masking tape & some cardboard boxes.

Masking Tape Balance Beam. Stretch a piece of masking tape across the floor to make a balance beam and encourage the child to walk the beam, one foot in front of the other. To increase their success you can also make a road, two lines of masking tape and they have to stay in the lines of the road. As the child improves you can start decreasing the width of the road. They can also practice hopping, walking backwards, or other silly ways to balance.

Masking Tape Shapes. Using a roll of masking tape, make shapes on the floor. For younger toddlers, use simple shapes like squares, triangles, or circles. If the child has already mastered simple shapes, expand their knowledge by including shapes like a diamond or trapezoid. Ask the child to “run to the square” or “jump to the triangle.” Other ways to get to the shapes include dancing, marching, wiggling or “flying.”

Box Path, Take some empty cardboard boxes or shoe boxes and line them up to make a path. Tell the children to follow the path of boxes, stepping into and out of the boxes. As they lift their feet to step over the sides of the boxes, they are spending more time standing on one foot.

Yoga for Balance and Stretching

** Adapted From Itsy Bitsy Yoga by Helen Garabedian*

STRETCHING POSES

Cat



1. Begin on all fours as in Table pose. Palms are shoulder-distance apart. Knees are hip-distance.
2. In Cat pose, lower your chin towards your chest as you tailbone tucks under. Your spine arches upward like a cat.
Look at your belly
3. Press your hands into the floor so your shoulders stay lifted. Feel the rounding of your spine as your midback reaches up to the sky.
Meow!

Cow



1. Begin on all fours as in Cat or Table pose. Your palms are shoulder-distance apart. Your knees and feet are hip-distance apart.
2. In Cow, tilt your hips and nose upward as your belly button presses downward.
Look up, head up.
Mooo! Exhale belly button to floor
Mmm.. Inhale and return to Table pose

Twisting Cow



1. Twisting Cow offers a sideways stretch of the spine and torso.
2. To twist your cow, come onto all fours.
Ready
3. Level your back as in Table pose and look over one shoulder. Your hips can stay in place as you twist towards the shoulder you're looking over.
Twist. Turn your head to left side
Cow! Look back over your left shoulder
Moo! Settle in the twist bringing left shoulder closer to stationary left hip
Mmm... Inhale loudly as you return to centre.

Child



1. From Table pose, drop your bottom to your heels.
Sit on your feet like this
2. Stretch your arms as far forward as possible.
Now, stretch your arms
3. Invite your forehead to rest on the floor.
Ahh! Child pose.

Down Dog



1. In Down Dog, you'll make a triangular shape with your body. It's best to give your child a profile of the pose as you demonstrate it.
Watch me, Down Dog!
2. Begin in Child pose. This sets the proper hand and foot alignment for Down Dog.
3. As you inhale, lift your head and hips upward, passing through the Cow pose.
4. Begin to exhale as you curl your toes under and straighten your legs.
5. Press your hands downward into the floor. Also press your heels down for a nice Down Dog stretch!
6. Say hi to your child before you lower out of Down Dog pose.
You try Down Dog!
Down Dog!
That's it!

Lunge



1. Start by facing your child in Down Dog pose.
2. During Lunge pose, note that your hands and front foot should form a horizontal line. Your chest rests on your front thigh and the back leg remains extended. Your eyes happily gaze forward at your child.
Let's do Lunge pose.
Step one foot forward.
See one foot forward?
See my foot between my hands?
Now, you try, you try Lunge pose!
Step one foot forward.
Step one foot forward.
Good step forward.
Good – that's Lunge pose!

Cobra



1. Lie down on your tummy.
Come on your tummy
2. Place your forearms on the floor and align your elbows under your shoulders. Gently squeeze your elbows toward your ribs.
Hands go here.
3. Open your palms and press all ten fingers into the floor. The middle finger of each hand should face front.
4. Press your shoulders down, away from your ears.
5. Pull your chest forward, and gaze upwards.
Lift your head like me!
6. Encourage your child to lie down like you.

Ready to hiss like a cobra?

Exhale as your tongue touches the back of your bottom teeth.

Mmm... Inhale deeply

Hiss... Exhale as you wiggle your head from side to side

Mmm... Inhale deeply

Hiss... Exhale as you wiggle your head from side to side

Continue hissing for as long as your child would like. When he is finished, dramatically collapse onto the floor and rest.

Danda



1. Invite your child to sit with her legs together and extended.
2. Now, position yourself across from your child.

Let's – stretch your legs out long and flex your feet.

Danda – Inhale, allowing the crown of your head to reach tall.

Clap toes – Clap your big toes together. Pause with excitement.

Point your big toes outward at a 45 degree angle as the heels stay together.

Clap toes – continue

Clap toes – continue

Danda – Excitedly clap your hands together

Repeat the toe-clapping Danda trick for as long as your toddler likes. If you're feeling silly,, double-it-up! Clap your hands and toes at the same time!

BALANCING POSES

Mountain



1. Stand two feet in front of your child.
2. Bring your feet together. Emphasize how the sides of your big toes can touch.
3. Press your palms together in front of your chest.
4. Take a deep breath in and feel your head reaching to the sky as your feet press down into the earth.

Feet together! – Stand and bring the sides of your feet together so that your big toes touch.

Big toes touch! That's it! – Look down at your toes. Clap the sides of your big toes together, prompting your child to bring his feet together.

Bring hands together – Press your palms together in front of your chest.

You do it – Float your palms 2 inches apart

Hands together! – Press palms together

Mountain pose! – Hold the pose.

Big breath in!

Nice tall Mountain pose!

Tree



1. Stand in front of your child.
2. Place one foot on the side of your shin.
3. You may help your child find her balance by holding her hand.

You do Tree pose! –Encourage your child to try Tree pose/

Lift one foot, Tree pose! – As you exhale, emphasize the lifting of one foot.

*You do it, foot here, foot here! – Show your child where to place her foot.
(on the side of her shin)*

*That's it! Good Tree pose! – Help a younger child by holding her hand or
Connecting the lifted foot to the shin.*

If your child is not holding your hand for balance continue.

Now bring hands together – Press your palm together in front of your chest.

Hands together, good job!

Ball



1. Invite your child to sit beside you on the floor. Be sure the area behind you and your child is clear.
2. Remain seated as you put your feet flat on the floor, with your knees bent and at chest height.

Let's sit like a ball!

Sit like me!

3. Show your child how to hug her thighs by wrapping and clasping your hands under your knees. Your chest should be close to your thighs as you sit small like a ball.

Now, hug your legs.

Give your legs a hug,

Good hug, nice Ball pose!

Level 2

That's it, not ready... - sit in Ball pose while hugging below your knees.

Lean back – slowly begin to lean back

*Lean back and lift your toes! – Lift your feet and toes a few inches off
the floor. Continue to hug your legs.*

*That's it...lift your toes – if your child is hesitant, support her by placing
one hand on her midback.*

A balancing ball!

Boat



1. Come into Ball pose.
Come into Ball pose.
2. Extend your arms and hold the back of your thighs.
Arms long,
3. Lean back and balance on your bottom as you extend your legs one at a time.
Arms long and reach one foot up to the sky.
4. With your hands holding the back of your thighs, extend both legs long and high.
Reach foot up to the sky! Good!
Reach other foot up, up, high!
5. Look at your toes and lift your head and feet upward.
Straighten your legs!
Look at your toes!
6. When your child is first entering Boat pose, please place one palm 2 inches behind or on your child's midback. This will give your toddler the support and balancing assistance he needs when beginning Boat pose.
Nice Boat pose!

Song for Boat Pose:

Row, row , row with me

Gently up the stream

Verily you're the cutest kid (or girl or boy)

I have ever seen!

Star



1. Stand in front of your child with your feet 18 to 24 inches apart. Your child's feet should be about 8 to 12 inches apart.
2. Inhale as you stretch your arms outward until they are horizontal.
3. Rock or teeter from side to side as you sing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

Twinkle, Shift your weight to the right foot, and lift left foot to the side

Twinkle Shift your weight to the left foot, lift the right foot to the side

Little Shift your weight to the right foot, lift the left foot to the side

Star Shift your weight to the left foot, lift the right foot to the side

How I Shift your weight to the right foot, lift the left foot to the side

Wonder Shift your weight to the left foot, lift the right foot to the side

What you Shift your weight to the right foot, lift the left foot to the side

Are Shift your weight to the left foot, lift the right foot to the side

Up, a - Shift your weight to the right foot, lift the left foot to the side

Bove the Shift your weight to the left foot, lift the right foot to the side

World Shift your weight to the right foot, lift the left foot to the side

So high Shift your weight to the left foot, lift the right foot to the side

Like a Shift your weight to the right foot, lift the left foot to the side

Diamond Shift your weight to the left foot, lift the right foot to the side

In the sky Shift your weight to the right foot, lift the left foot to the side

Warrior



1. Stand near your child in Mountain pose and inhale deeply.
Ready, Warrior pose!
2. As you exhale, jump your feet and arms out. Give the jump a "pssht" sound effect.
Pssht!
3. Find comfort. The knee of the front foot bends so it is aligned over the ankle. The toes of the front foot point forward. The back foot turns outward at a 45 degree angle.
4. Extend your arms long and strong. Extend your fingertips away from the body with the palms facing down. Relax your shoulders.
Warrior pose!

Repeat Warrior several times.