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## Gross Motor/Physical Therapy at Home

### Preschoolers

Check with your physical therapist or occupational therapist to determine what the best or safest activities are for your particular child's needs

#### *Vestibular (mom/dad/caregiver provides movement for me)*

- ✦ Place child in empty box/laundry basket and give them rides.
- ✦ Blanket rides: can use sibling or caregiver for assistance
- ✦ Swinging in blanket (often will take 2 adults)
- ✦ Rocking on therapy ball or small beach ball
  - Can rock sideways, back and forth, in circles
- ✦ Therapy ball/large playground ball: with supervision, child can sit on ball and bounce



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### *Proprioceptive (heavy work activities for my large muscles)*

- ✚ Fill laundry basket/box with books and allow them to push it around the house.*
- ✚ Let child put books into and out of box/laundry basket*
- ✚ Tug of war game*
  - Tug of war games: you can make this fun with blankets, etc. You do not need anything special to play tug of war. I allow kids to “pull me over” and playfully fall on the floor when they pull super hard. They love to win and be stronger than the adult.*
- ✚ Step into and out of box/laundry basket*
- ✚ Push on walls to “make the room bigger” with your feet or hands*
- ✚ Pick up objects in novel ways: pick up a balloon/ball, etc with your feet, with your knees, with your elbows.*



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## General Strengthening (to make my muscles strong)

- ✚ Tug of war game
  - Tug of war games: you can make this fun with blankets, etc. You do not need anything special to play tug of war. I allow kids to “pull me over” and playfully fall on the floor when they pull super hard. They love to win and be stronger than the adult.
- ✚ Step into and out of box/laundry basket
- ✚ Push on walls to “make the room bigger” with your feet or hands
- ✚ Take my pet for a walk: use ribbon or extra dog/cat leashes to allow toddlers to walk their “pets” (stuffed animals) (with supervision only)
- ✚ Yoga: preschoolers can do simple yoga poses such as downward dog, upward dog, tree, etc.
- ✚ Music: just put on some kids music and dance. Encourage imitation: you imitate them, they imitate you.
  - Strength movements: jumping, squatting, reaching up on toes, high stepping (marching)
- ✚ Use shoe boxes or paper plates as skates
- ✚ Painters tape: put down to jump over
- ✚ Use boxes, couch cushions, laundry baskets to build towers and obstacle courses. Give rides and encourage preschoolers to give siblings rides (with supervision)
- ✚ Wheelbarrow walk, duck walk, squat walk to get to places in the house.
- ✚ Get outside: we are practicing social distancing, but you can still go for a walk or play in your backyard.



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## Ball Skills

- ✦ *Balloons: you can hit them with pool noodles, or just play with them. USE SUPERVISION*
- ✦ *Create a bowling game with recyclables (empty soda/water bottles, empty paper towel/toilet paper rolls, etc.). Use a playground ball, tennis ball, etc as a "bowling ball"*
- ✦ *Practice kicking, throwing, catching where it is safe*
- ✦ *You can also practice catching with bean bags, blankets, clothing, sponges or anything soft that is around the house*
- ✦ *Push a ball around the house with various body parts: foot, elbow, nose, etc.*
- ✦ *Golf with tennis balls and empty paper towel rolls, etc.*
- ✦ *Throw balls into boxes, laundry baskets, etc.*
- ✦ *Kick balls into laundry baskets/boxes like soccer*



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## *General Gross Motor Play (just for fun)*

- + Make forts, etc out of blankets and furniture. Play in, crawl in, etc.*
- + Exercise together: lots of online free exercises for adults now. Exercise and encourage your toddler to exercise with you. They can do most anything modified.....often they will modify on their own so you do it (maybe at slower pace) and have them copy you*
- + Bubble Play: they can clap them, step on them, stand on one foot to try to pop them*
- + Make an obstacle course out of things you have at home*
  - o Couch cushions*
  - o Boxes/Laundry baskets*
  - o Pool noodles*
  - o Step stools*
  - o tunnels*
- + Do shape/color hunts: look all over the house for a particular shape or color*
- + Sound scavenger hunts: look around the house for items that sound like.....or begin with the sound....*



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## *General Gross Motor Play (continued)*

- ✚ *Create shapes, numbers, letters with painters tape (can be large or small) and have kids trace. Or use in scavenger hunt*
  - *If you do larger ones and cover with clear contact paper they can jump to them, or do a funny animal walk etc. to them*
  - *For older kids with numbers you can jump to do addition*
  - *For older kids, you can jump/move to do patterns (red, red, yellow, yellow)*
  - *You can have them make a sound or name something (name an animal, name a color, tell me a number, etc.) to allow them to move to another spot.*
  - *Works for working on hard speech sounds as well. Have them say the sound they are working on so many times before moving....they get to pick how they move (then they feel in control)*
- ✚ *Get outside: we are practicing social distancing, but you can still go for a walk or play in your backyard.*



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## *Balance*

- ✚ *Imitate standing on one foot*
- ✚ *Place objects on the floor to step over*
  - *Can use pool noodles*
  - *Broom handles*
  - *Shoes*
- ✚ *Obstacle course with many different challenges and a variety of ways to move body*
  - *Use different positions like walk, tall kneel, crawling, etc*
- ✚ *Have child place one foot on tennis ball or playground ball and play a catching game, etc with sibling or caregiver (WITH SUPERVISION ONLY)*



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## Imitation Skills

- ✚ Motor imitation songs
  - You tube
  - Spotify
  - Make up your own
  - Head Shoulder Knees Toes, Jumping songs, etc.
- ✚ Simon says or other action games
- ✚ Animal walks: act out various animal walks
- ✚ Act out flash cards. Alphabet action cards...how many actions words for "a" (move like an ant, applause, wave your arms, move like an airplane), "b" (bounce, bump, turn yourself into a banana, etc). Act out number cards: jump 1 x, turn in a circle 2 x, etc.
- ✚ Act out books: many childrens books can be put into action. Be creative and instead of sitting to read, act the book out as you read it. Or read it once sitting then re-read with actions
- ✚ Create action cards: can you cardstock, paper, etc. Put actions on 1 side, turn over and have a child pick 1. Act out the card.
- ✚ Come up with actions that match a number on dice. Have the child roll the dice and then match the number to the action. (example: roll a 1, 1 is move like a bear, etc.)
- ✚ Act out different athletes: be a rower, be a basketball player (can be pretend basketball), rope climber, mountain climber, skier, etc.
- ✚ Pick up objects in novel ways: pick up a balloon/ball, etc with your feet, with your knees, with your elbows.



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## *Postural Control Skills/Core Strengthening*

### *+ Therapy ball:*

- o Child sits on and you rock back and forth or side to side while they sustain balance*
- o Child holds your hands and rocks/moves him/her self while sitting on ball*
- o Assist child to sit on ball then have them lie backwards so there head is down (like a back bend). Have puzzle pieces or something for them to pick up and sit back up to put in puzzle/shape sorter/match*
- o Have a sit up contest*
- o Wheelbarrow walking*
- o Push up contest (can modify to doing on knees)*
- o Child lies on ball on belly and walks hands out to pick up puzzle piece, shape sorter, matching game*

**REMEMBER SELF CARE.** *When your child is sleeping or engaged in a TV show take time for yourself to do Yoga, exercise, take a bath, read a book, catch up with a friend using an online media platform (FM Messenger, Zoom, etc) or if another caregiver is present, take a walk by yourself. Remember taking care of yourself is as important as taking care of your child.*