

## Pre-School activities for shoulder stability and control

*Activities that encourage the muscles on either side of the shoulders to pull together will help the child to hold the shoulder joints steady while the arms are moved in various directions. It is also important that the child learns to control the speed, force and degree of movement in each arm so that arm movements are smooth. The following activities will encourage stability and smooth arm control.*

- **Crawling**

The child can crawl around obstacles, over various surfaces (cushions, beanbags, blankets and so on), through tunnels and over soft-play equipment. Make the game more fun by lacing a beanbag on the child's back and asking them to transport it to the other side of the room.

- **Rocking Horse Exercise**

Ask the child to assume an all-fours position with elbows and wrists directly below the shoulders and fingers facing forwards. Ask the child to rock gently backwards and forwards, ensuring that the head moves forward to put weight through the arms. Give the child directions to rock 'faster' or 'slower', coming to a slow rest at the end.

- **Raise it up**

Engage in activities on a vertical surface, at shoulder height. This could be a chalkboard, easel, smart board, window, and mirror or bathroom tiles. Vertically position peg boards, a magnetic tray or magnetic board by fastening to a wall.

Press Playdough or Wikki Stix onto a vertical surface and let the child press things like beads and coins into it.

Drawing large movements across a board, right to left and then left to right and up and down. Standing with elbows reaching the board, careful not to lean forward.

Example: Join up shapes, animals, colours, a rainbow, draw lines to form a cage over an animal.

## Early Years Support & Assessment Team (EYSAT)

Stand up and draw large numbers, letters and shapes in the air.

- **Bath Crayons**

Foam on bathroom tiles is a fun thing to draw in at home. Give a large paint brush and a bucket of water to 'paint' walls outside. Draw on a window with Windoline and let the child rub it off.

- **Playdough**

Stand up to use Playdough on a table. Flatten the dough with the palm of the hand or a rolling pin. Hands should be open on the rolling pin rather than holding the handles.

- **Donkey Kicks**

While on all fours (both facing the floor and facing upward) shift weight forwards onto palms and kick legs behind or to the side.

- **Bat and Ball**

Use foam bat to hit a ball suspended at shoulder height.

- **Cooking**

Do cooking activities that require pouring and stirring.

- **Bean Bags**

Throwing and aiming activities.

- **Hula Hoop**

Throwing hoops on to targets.

- **Threading activities**

Using long laces or threads.

- **Pouring Activities**

Sand, beans, water.

- **Wheelbarrows**

Working with a partner, who holds child's ankles while he/she walks on hands in all directions.

## Early Years Support & Assessment Team (EYSAT)

- **Wall Presses**  
Standing facing the wall, hands placed on it at shoulder height and shoulder width apart. Gradually bend arms until nose nearly touched the wall, and then straighten again.
- **Sliding on Floor**  
Sitting on floor, legs outstretched in front. Place hands flat on floor beside hips, and slide bottom forwards until arms stretched out behind. Move hands to new position and repeat. Then try going backwards.
- **Floor activities**  
On large pieces of paper, track a large figure of eight using cars, trains or markers.  
  
Large floor puzzles.
- **Nature Walk**  
Going on a walk with backpacks, reaching up to collect nature objects or hidden objects of reference.
- **Snakes Snails and Worms:**  
Using ribbon sticks make wiggly movements along the floor or choose one or two children to make movements whilst the others jump over them.
- **Trees Blowing in the Wind:**  
Using ribbon sticks get the children to turn twist tilt and bend by shaking their sticks behind them in front of them above their heads making huge movements.
- **Push along Toys**  
Pulling and pushing trucks: load with wooden blocks or sand.
- **Lifting and Carrying**  
Carrying buckets of sand or gravel from one place to another.  
  
Going Shopping: loading trolleys and baskets with vegetables and tins.

## Early Years Support & Assessment Team (EYSAT)

- **Workbench:**  
Hammering nails into wood.
  
- **Spinning Art:**  
Line base of a salad spinner with paper, drop paint onto paper, put lid on and turn handle to make it spin creating a pattern.
  
- **Digging:**  
Digging in soil, make holes for planting bulbs and vegetables.
  
- **Tidy Up Time**  
Sweep leaves up.  
  
Help stack chairs.  
  
Carry gym mats with peers.  
  
Encourage child to help put boxes of toys away.  
  
Let the child clean tables using a cloth and rubbing hard.  
Using a trigger action spray bottle will also develop hand strength..
  
- **Throwing**  
Throw a beanbag to knock down a target or wet sponges to make a pattern on a path or wall.
  
- **Tug of war**  
With twisted Lycra material.