

## Primitive Reflexes

The Small Group Programme

4 - 8 years

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# Introducing the Small Group Programme

This 16 week programme is all about small group work and movement-based games and exercises to support children's motor skills, sensory processing, and self-regulation. The small group setting allows for focused, personalised attention, making it easier for children to build confidence, improve emotional well-being, and thrive both in school and beyond. Wired for Movement is a fun, effective approach that enhances children's school experience.

## Programme highlights:

- Fun, active, and engaging sessions that help children thrive.
- 12 specially selected exercises and games for small spaces with minimal equipment.
- Split into two 8 week blocks for use across terms times and giving flexibility
- Group sizes of 4 - 8 children, with each session lasting 10-15 minutes.
- 2 - 3 sessions per week for the best results (at least 2 required).

## What to do first

- 1 Print and complete the Initial Assessment for each child in your group.
- 2 Complete the optional Child's Aspirations and Goal section.
- 3 Read the page 'Top Tips for Success' to help set up your small group session.

## What to do during the programme

- 1 Do the exercise same time and place - challenge using the progression and refer to the success tips
- 2 Implement some or all of the Day-to-Day Recommendations. Provide a copy of the page for use at home.
- 3 If any of the included games are not suitable for any reason, download an alternative game from our website.

## What to do at the end of 16 weeks

- 1 Complete the Follow Up Assessment and compare to the Initial Assessment (you can also do this week 8)
- 2 Review both assessments and the child's Aspirations and Goals, and celebrate all and any improvements.
- 3 Based on the results you may repeat the primitive reflexes programme, or download another from the website.

# The Amazing body

In the intricate tapestry of child development, the interplay between sensory systems, muscle tone, motor skills, body awareness, and emotional self-regulation forms a complex and dynamic network essential for growth and learning. Each element, distinct yet interconnected, equips a child to navigate their environment with confidence and skill.

From inside the womb, as a baby, into infancy and a young child, the journey of a child's development is an elaborate dance of physical movements and sensory explorations. For the young baby, tummy time is foundational, enhancing motor skills more effectively than back positioning. This stage involves reflexive movements, where moving the head triggers coordinated limb responses, evolving into independent control of the head and limbs. This progression enables complex cross-pattern movements vital for seamless, fluid motion.

Central to this development is the child's mastery over their movements, gradually gaining the ability to bring limbs towards the body's midline and eventually crossing it. This skill is foundational for future physical coordination and balance.

The vestibular system, our internal gyroscope for balance and spatial orientation, begins developing remarkably early, around six to eight weeks after conception, and is fully functional at birth. This system is crucial for a child's ability to navigate their world, providing gravitational security and spatial awareness (proprioception). Its harmonious development with other sensory inputs is vital; any misalignment can lead to disorientation and insecurity, affecting the child's interaction with their environment.

The tactile system follows, enriching the child's sensory world with vital feedback. Touch confirms the vestibular system's readings of the environment, with varying sensitivities influencing engagement with surroundings. Tactile-rich activities enhance the integration of tactile and vestibular information, creating a comprehensive sensory experience).

Early in development, the auditory system plays a crucial role, with the foetus beginning to 'hear' in the last trimester of pregnancy. The transition from hearing to 'tuning in', understanding, and producing language requires fine-tuning, laying the foundation for speech,

reading, and listening skills. Disruptions during this phase, such as from ear infections or allergies, can significantly impact a child's auditory processing and linguistic development.

Visual development, though not starting until after birth, progresses rapidly alongside the vestibular system and motor skills. A strong vestibular system supports the visual system, providing the spatial context needed for processing visual stimuli. Without this support, children may over-rely on their visual system, leading to challenges with tasks like tracking, focusing, and depth perception.

Stress profoundly affects these developmental processes, triggering a 'flight, fight, or freeze' response that diverts neural activity from higher brain functions crucial for learning, reasoning, emotional regulation, and communication. For children with sensory and motor development challenges, everyday situations, including classroom life, can become overwhelming sources of stress.

The Wired for Movement Small Group Programmes are designed to address the developmental and emotional needs of students in a group setting. By focusing on the unique requirements of each group, these interventions enhance not only physical skills but also learning, behaviour, concentration, and emotional well-being. This approach provides a strong foundation for improved growth, self-confidence, and ongoing academic success. Through targeted exercises and games, the programme fosters a positive, confidence-building environment that helps students develop lasting skills for both academic and personal growth.



# What are the Primitive Reflexes?

**Primitive reflexes are automatic, involuntary movements that babies are born with, serving as the foundation for more complex movements and behaviours that develop over time. These reflexes include sucking, rooting, grasping, the Babinski reflex, and the Moro reflex.**

Primitive reflexes typically develop in utero and are fully present at birth, playing a crucial role in an infant's survival and early development. For instance, the Moro reflex is a defensive mechanism that allows the newborn to respond to impending danger and alerts the caregiver that they need to be comforted or held.

As a child grows, these primitive reflexes are naturally inhibited by the brain, usually by the age of one year. This process of inhibition allows higher brain functions to take over, enabling the development of more advanced motor skills and voluntary movements. For example, the grasping reflex, where a baby instinctively grips anything placed in their palm, is replaced by voluntary grasping and fine motor skills as the child matures.

However, when primitive reflexes do not become naturally inhibited during a child's development, they are considered retained primitive reflexes. Retained reflexes can affect children in various ways, including delays in gross and fine motor development, challenges with balance and coordination, difficulty with sensory processing and integration, problems with attention and concentration, and issues with emotional regulation and behaviour. A retained Moro reflex, in particular, can affect a child's balance and coordination and make them more prone to anxiety and sensory overload. In general, retained primitive reflexes can contribute to conditions such as ADHD, dyslexia, and other learning disabilities.

The Moro reflex, or startle reflex, is particularly noteworthy. When a baby experiences a sudden change in position or a loud noise, they react with an involuntary startle, extending their arms and legs before bringing them back in. This reflex is crucial for early survival, but if it persists beyond the first few months, it can lead to hypersensitivity and overreaction to sensory stimuli, affecting the child's daily functioning.



# Primitive Reflexes

## A Summary view

- Primitive reflexes are automatic, involuntary movements present at birth that serve as the foundation for more complex movements and behaviours. These reflexes typically develop in utero and are fully present at birth.
- As a child grows, these reflexes are naturally inhibited by the brain, usually by the age of one year, allowing higher brain functions and voluntary movements to develop.
- When these reflexes do not become naturally inhibited, they are considered retained, which can affect motor development, sensory processing, attention, and behaviour.

### COMMON SIGNS

Clumsiness, or difficulty standing on one leg.  
Overreaction to sudden noises or movements  
Struggles with fine motor tasks like writing  
Difficulty sitting still or maintaining good posture.  
High levels of anxiety, frequent outbursts

### IMPACT ON LEARNING

Difficulty maintaining concentration  
Poor handwriting, trouble with cutting  
Issues with eye tracking and visual processing  
Increased impulsivity and inattention  
Struggles with forming friendships

## Using Wired for Movement to make a difference

By combining neuro-developmental movement patterns, coordination sequences, and vestibular exercises, the Wired for Movement games in this program aim to enable children to have:

- ✓ Boosted Self-Esteem: Increased success in physical and academic tasks
- ✓ Enhanced Social Skills: Greater confidence and ability to participate in group activities
- ✓ Heightened Emotional Regulation: Reduced anxiety and emotional outbursts.
- ✓ Better Academic Performance: Increased focus, improved handwriting, & enhanced reading skills
- ✓ Improved Balance and Coordination: Enhanced ability to perform physical activities with ease

# Introducing the Assessments

## The Importance of Assessing

The purpose of this assessment is to track each child's development and highlight areas of progress throughout the programme. You have permission to make multiple copies of each assessment for use with your groups. If you already have existing assessments in place and feel an additional one would be redundant, feel free to skip ours.

This assessment is provided as a useful guide, focusing on identifying key areas for improvement and measuring progress after the first 8 week block, and again after 16 weeks, when the programme finishes.

### Why We Find a Baseline and Review?

This assessment serves as a helpful tool to measure where the child starts and track their progress. While it is not a formal research-based measure, it is designed to be a practical and meaningful way to highlight improvements over time. By comparing the baseline with the follow-up results, we can identify key areas of growth and see how the child is benefiting from the movement programme.

### Aspirations and Goals

There's also a page for the child to complete with an adult, focused on their aspirations and goals. This is optional but it is a great way for the child to think about what they'd like to achieve on completion of the programme. It helps them focus on their personal goals and stay motivated as they progress.

### How to Complete the Assessment

- Write the child's name clearly on the assessment form and keep it secure. The information is confidential.
- Involve the child in the process. Ask them to be present when completing the assessment and encourage them to provide their input. Their self-reflection and awareness are of great value.
- Use the 1-10 scale for each question. For example, "1" means 'No Signs' and "10" means 'Very Frequently'. Help the child understand the scale.
- If there is a question that is not possible to answer, draw a line through it and make a note next to it.

# Child's Aspirations & Goals

## Introduction

Setting goals can help you stay focused and excited about this programme. At the end, you can look back and see how much you've improved!

## Before you start:

### 1 Your Top Three Goals

What are the three most important things you want to achieve during this programme?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### 2 What You Want to Get Better At

What specific skills do you want to improve?  
(For example, moving better, feeling calmer, or being more focused.)

- 
- 
- 

### 3 Anything other to include

Is there anything else you want to work on or achieve?

## After you finish:

### 1 Biggest Changes

What are the biggest improvements you noticed in yourself?

# Primitive Reflexes : Baseline Assessment

Name of child:

Date:

Adult:

Use this assessment to gain a clearer understanding of the challenges and to track each child's progress. If you have already completed the assessment online, you may wish to record the baseline scores here as well.

## If you haven't yet completed the baseline assessment:

Use the 0-10 scale for each question and circle the appropriate number.

Add up all the scores and record the total.

The Follow-Up Assessment should ideally be completed at week 16, but it may also be done at week 8.

0 No Signs   2 Occasionally   4 Bit more than average   6 Frequently   8 Very Frequently   10 Always

- 1 Do they react strongly to sudden stimuli, like loud noises, unexpected touches, or changes in head position? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 2 Do they struggle to calm down or self-soothe after becoming stressed or overwhelmed? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 3 Do they experience emotional or behavioural challenges, such as anxiety, impulsivity, or difficulty interacting with others socially? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 4 Do they show sensitivity to certain types of touch or pressure, reacting negatively or excessively to things like clothing materials, textures, or physical contact? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 5 Do they have difficulty maintaining balance or coordinating their movements during physical activities, such as running or jumping? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 6 Do they frequently display exaggerated startle responses, even when there is no obvious threat or trigger? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 7 Do they have trouble maintaining focus or paying attention during tasks, such as schoolwork or activities that require concentration? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 8 Do they experience difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or experience restless sleep patterns? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 9 Are they overly sensitive to sensory stimuli, such as bright lights, loud noises, or strong smells? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 10 Do they show signs of insecure attachment to caregivers, such as being clingy, having trouble separating, or needing excessive reassurance? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Total:

# Primitive Reflexes : Follow up Assessment

Name of child:

Date:

Adult:

Congratulations on completing week 8 or 16 of the programme. Please **do not look** at the Baseline Assessment before completing this one to avoid bias. Once you've completed this assessment, compare the results, reflect on the progress, and celebrate any improvements. Remember, each child progresses at their own pace. These scores are a guideline, and it's nice to celebrate any growth, no matter how small.

## Results Guidelines:

66 - 100 - Consider the Wired for Movement Individual Programme. If that's not possible, then repeat the 16 week programme.

46 - 65 - Repeat this programme. Consider downloading alternative Reflexes games to keep sessions engaging.

26 - 45 - Repeating one 8 week block will be beneficial. You may also use our online Chooser Chart to identify another area for support.

- 1 Do they react strongly to sudden stimuli, like loud noises, unexpected touches, or changes in head position? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 2 Do they struggle to calm down or self-soothe after becoming stressed or overwhelmed? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 3 Do they experience emotional or behavioural challenges, such as anxiety, impulsivity, or difficulty interacting with others socially? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
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- 10 Do they show signs of insecure attachment to caregivers, such as being clingy, having trouble separating, or needing excessive reassurance? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

# Top Tips for a Successful Session

Starting a new programme and working with a new group can be both exciting and a little nerve-wracking. To help you get the most out of your first sessions, here's a top tip guide based on what's worked well for others. Keep these tips in mind, and you'll be off to a great start, building positive connections and setting the group up for success.

## Consistency is Key – Focus on Repetition and Routine:

- 1 We recommend three sessions per week, each lasting 10 - 15 minutes, to ensure steady progress. Adapt the sequence of games if needed, but aim to stick to the recommended schedule as this will improve performance over time.

## Follow the Programme Structure, but Keep It Engaging:

- 2 Stick to the planned exercises and games, but use the built-in variations to keep the sessions dynamic. Adjust the pace and energy based on the children's responses to keep them engaged.

## Create a Positive and Supportive Environment:

- 3 Start each session with a welcoming tone. Use praise and encouragement throughout to build confidence and keep children motivated. Focus on effort and participation, not just results.

## Engage the Children in Active Participation:

- 4 Involve children in helping set up and preparing the exercises and games and ask for their input when possible. Encourage effort, reminding them that improvement is the focus, not perfection.

## Celebrate Progress and Reflect Together:

- 5 At the end of each session, keep the positive atmosphere by reflecting on what went well and celebrating achievements. After the first 8 week block, use the follow up assessment with the students to highlight and celebrate their progress. At 16 weeks repeat the follow up assessment and review their Aspirations and Goals, and allow them to rewrite them if they wish.

# Day-to-Day Activities Supporting a child with retained Primitive Reflexes

In addition to this programme of specific Wired for Movement exercises, there are a number of day-to-day activities at school and home that are beneficial for children who need extra support.

## Establish a Predictable Routine

- 1 Establishing a predictable daily routine can help reduce your child's anxiety and provide a sense of security. This routine should include consistent times for waking up, meals, play, study, and bedtime. Additionally, preparing your child for transitions between activities by giving them advance notice can further ease their anxiety and help them feel more in control."

## Provide a Calming Environment

- 2 Loud noises, bright lights, and other stimuli can overwhelm children with retained primitive reflexes. Creating a calm environment with soft lighting and white noise can help reduce reflex frequency and intensity. Consider using calming strategies like gentle music or nature sounds to make their surroundings more soothing.

## Use Calming Strategies

- 3 Calming strategies such as deep breathing, meditation, and visualisation can help your child relax and reduce the intensity of their startle reflex. Encourage your child to practise these techniques regularly, perhaps incorporating them into their daily routine.

## Provide Deep Pressure Input

- 4 Deep pressure input or compression clothing can help calm the nervous system and improve body awareness, aiding in the integration of primitive reflexes. Consider using weighted blankets, compression vests, or snug-fitting clothing to provide this sensory support.

## Encourage Physical Activity

- 5 Physical activity, such as running, jumping, and climbing, can help your child develop their gross motor skills and improve their balance and coordination. Encourage your child to engage in age-appropriate physical activities regularly, ensuring they have plenty of opportunities for active play each day.

# How to use the Game Cards

To help ensure a smooth and successful experience, the layout of every game is consistent. The top panel provides key information in easy-to-read circles, giving you a quick snapshot of essential details like music, equipment, participation type, and age suitability.

The “How to Play” section contains the main instructions, with each game featuring only 3 simple steps. This design is intended to keep things clear and straightforward, so you can deliver a fantastic experience for your pupils without feeling overwhelmed by too much detail.

In most games, the “How to Play” instructions are directly readable from the page. When this isn't possible, rest assured that the instructions are still simple to follow and understand. Below, you'll find additional information to help you create variations and ensure success in your sessions.



pushed down into their chest.

On the instruction **'spring time'**, they slowly and gently unfurl their limbs, their petals reaching up to the sun. Their limbs extend high and then wide, ending with their arms and legs wide resting on the floor. They hold this position for 10 seconds.

Then, hearing the instruction **'winter time'**, they reverse their movement by slowly contracting their legs and arms and wrapping themselves up tight. Once they have returned to bud form, they hold for 10 seconds before repeating three to five times.

**Make it a success**  
This repetitive activity is designed to relax and improve body awareness and inhibit startle reflexes. Focus on a rhythmic opening, holding and closing choreography.

**Progressions & Variations**  
For those who find the slow pace too challenging, combine a series of quick opening and closing buds, then incremental movements (like a stop-motion animation) before progressing to a slow, controlled sequence.

**Primary Purpose**  
To help integrate primitive startle reflexes and enhance proprioception.

Proprioception, Body Awareness, Emotional Resilience, Reflexes, Coordination, Gymnastics

## Progressions & Variations

The first instruction suggests how to make the main game simpler. The following instructions offer ways to increase the challenge for your students.

Before progressing, check the 'Make it a Success' panel to ensure children are meeting the current challenge.

Once they have returned to bud form, they hold for 10 seconds before repeating three to five times.

**Make it a success**  
This repetitive and rhythmic spatial awareness activity is designed to relax and improve body awareness and inhibit startle reflexes. Focus on a rhythmic opening, holding and closing choreography.

**Primary Purpose**  
To help integrate primitive startle reflexes and enhance proprioception.

Body Awareness

## Make it a Success

This panel outlines how the game, exercise, or technique should be performed, including key points to look for to support improvement and development. Following this advice will help your students gain the full benefits from the activity, ensuring better outcomes.

**Progressions & Variations**  
For those who find the slow pace too challenging, combine a series of quick opening and closing buds, then incremental movements (stop-motion animation) before progressing to a slow, controlled sequence.

**Primary Purpose**  
To help integrate primitive startle reflexes and enhance proprioception.

Proprioception, Body Awareness, Emotional Resilience, Reflexes, Coordination, Body Control, Mats, Track & Zone

## Areas of Development & Music Links

In the lower left section, you'll find the areas of motor, sensory, personal, and social development the game supports (see page 6). Any equipment required is listed at the top and here below. If music is included, scan the QR code to access the track directly.

**Primary Purpose**  
To help integrate primitive startle reflexes and enhance proprioception.

**Primary Purpose**  
To help integrate primitive startle reflexes and enhance proprioception.

Wired For Movement

## Primary Purpose

Each game focuses on a specific area, detailed in the primary purpose to provide you with an overview of its key benefits. Other elements are woven into the game, and the icons to the left indicate the additional areas the game aims to improve.

# The Small Group Primitive Reflexes Programme

## Weeks 1 - 8

	Game	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Week 1	Spring Flowers Egg					
Week 2	Snow Angels Olympic Skydivers					
Week 3	Hungry Eagles Timid Turtles					
Week 4	Twin Heads Baby Roll					
Week 5	Spring Flowers Egg					
Week 6	Snow Angels Olympic Skydivers					
Week 7	Hungry Eagles Timid Turtles					
Week 8	Twin Heads Baby Roll					

Weeks 9 - 16 next page...

# The Small Group Primitive Reflexes Programme

## Block 2 - Weeks 9 - 16

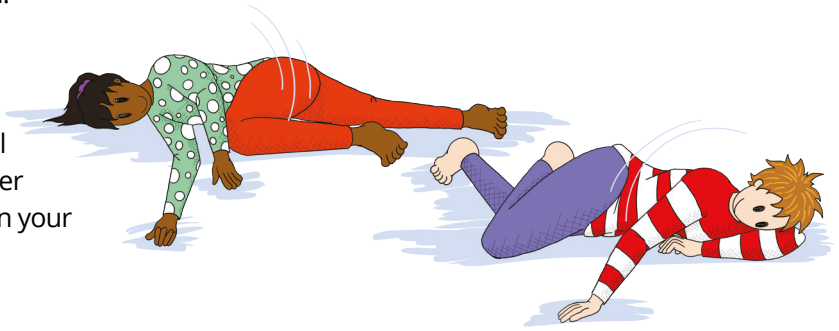
	Game	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Week 9	Rocking Egg					
Week 10	Olympic Skydivers Rise and Shine					
Week 11	Twin Heads The Sneaky Crawler Biscuit Thief!					
Week 12	Life of a Raindrop Elephants on the March					
Week 13	Rocking Egg					
Week 14	Olympic Skydivers Rise and Shine					
Week 15	Twin Heads The Sneaky Crawler Biscuit Thief!					
Week 16	Life of a Raindrop Elephants on the March					

## How to play

**1** You're a baby learning how to roll for the first time. Start by lying on your back. Turn your head to the right and bring your left arm across your body to the opposite shoulder, then return your arm and repeat with the other arm. Repeat in both directions 5 times.

**2** Now do the same for the legs. Turn your head to the right and roll the left knee and hip all the way over so your knee is on the floor. Return your legs and repeat with the other. Repeat both 5 times.

**3** Now you're ready for a complete roll. As you turn your head to the right, roll your left shoulder and knee over at the same time. Keep rolling over until you're able to lie on your tummy. Return to lying on your back. Turn and roll to the left. Go back onto your back and keep practising and repeating.



### Progressions & Variations

Turn the head and repeat one movement multiple times. Start by turning the head and swinging one arm across and back 10 times, then repeat for each limb individually.

Working in pairs, one partner assists in getting the baby to roll all the way.

Position mats in a long line. Children do their baby roll from one end of the mat to the other. When the group has completed it one way, they return by rolling in the opposite direction.

### Make it a success

The aim is for children to attain a cohesive sequence of coordinated movements of the head, hip and shoulder. Focus on individual components but give the opportunity to do the whole movement.

It's natural for children to use momentum to rotate their body, but spend time on the slow and controlled sequence.

At the end of the exercise, get the children to walk and run around the space, as this will help anchor the gains in their posture, gait and cross-lateral movement control.

### Primary Purpose

An essential neuro-developmental movement pattern to help integrate reflexes, improve coordination and increase core postural strength.



Reflexes  
Coordination  
Gross Motor Skills



Body Control



Muscle Tone

## Exploration

### How to play

- 1 Imagine you are inside an egg and are ready to hatch free. Lie on your back and curl up tight.
- 2 To emerge from your egg, slowly and purposefully push out your hands, arms, legs and head to crack the egg. Crack the shell of your egg. Spread your arms and legs and emerge free and happy into the world.
- 3 Jump up, and wander around the room. When I call out 'Egg', stand still, lower yourself to the floor and curl up tight as if you were in an egg again. Repeat three or four times and then add some of the variations below.



### Progressions & Variations

The group can imagine that they are whatever being they choose to be: a bird, a dinosaur, a monster, a mermaid, a lizard, a cloud!

Partner up and pretend that, as twins, they slowly unfurl themselves and stretch out to break through the egg and emerge into the world.

### Make it a success

This activity is designed to help integrate the primitive startle reflexes. The participants should focus on the tight foetal position at the start and the control of opening out and the sense of breaking through into a happy world of wonder and freedom.

This is a drama-like activity, so you may need strong leadership to help everyone get the most of it. If you see a few good examples, demonstrate their performance to the class.

Some children may benefit from a weight on them like a towel or a bib, so that they have a tactile sense of their imagined experience.

### Primary Purpose

A repeating activity to help integrate the Moro reflex to reduce anxiety and impulsive behaviour



Reflexes  
Coordination



Self Esteem



Emotional Resilience  
Creative Thinking



Gymnastics  
Dance

## Integration

## How to play

- 1** Find a space in the room and get onto all fours. You are in a jungle and have turned into an elephant! Imagine your nose has grown into a long trunk.
- 2** You are the matriarch (leader) of your herd taking all the elephants through the jungle. Plod forward by moving your left hand and right leg, then your right hand and left leg.
- 3** The jungle is now very dense and you have to pull trees up and throw them to make a path. Grab a tree that's in front of you, move your left hand forward and swing your trunk over to the left to throw the tree aside. Grab another tree in front of you, move your right hand and swing your trunk to the right and throw it aside. Keep creating a path for your herd.



## Progressions & Variations

Start with a homolateral crawl - left hand and left knee forward, then right hand and right knee. Introduce the swinging of the trunk as per the main activity.

Start off crawling and slowly introduce the idea of swinging the trunk to uproot trees. Some to the left, some to the right.

This activity is being filmed in slow motion: children move in very slow motion.

## Make it a success

Encourage large, and slow movements. The hands move forward and out to the side. The head turns so children look past their fingertips and then up at the ceiling as they toss their tree.

The key to this activity is the coordination of the head turn and hand movement. Spend time focusing children on exaggerated head movements that follow the hand going forward.

Although on the surface this looks like an easy movement, it can be very complicated for some children. Consider having an initial session using the homolateral movement variation.



Vestibular



Body Awareness



Reflexes  
Coordination  
Gross Motor Skills



Gymnastics



Muscle Tone



Body Control



## Primary Purpose

Improving balance, laterality, hand-eye coordination and muscle tone.

## How to play

**1** Find a space in the room. You are Eagles hungry for some dinner. Stretch your wings (arms) straight out and begin flying (walking around) slowly. Gently turn all the way around in one direction and then all the way back in the other direction, circling around, looking for your dinner.

**2** Suddenly you see a squirrel, perfect for your dinner, running around on a tree branch. Stare at the squirrel, and without moving your eyes away from it, start making little turns, one way, then the other (turns should be 90 degrees, do 6-8 turns).

**3** On my command, swoop towards your prey, flying quickly towards a wall and suddenly stand very still, arms by your sides, with your eyes closed for 10 seconds as you pretend to eat your yummy dinner. (Repeat 3 or 4 times)



## Progressions & Variations

Let the children turn within their own limits, which might be a few degrees either side of centre.

Reduce the time spent with eyes closed for those who lose balance easily.

The children stand on tiptoes throughout the whole movement or on one leg when their eyes are closed.

## Make it a success

The warm up should include some jogging and little jumps, swinging the arms upwards for momentum when jumping. Stretch the jaw and facial muscles with four big and loud yawns.

This is quite a demanding ocular-vestibular exercise, so keep the duration short. The key to this movement is to fix the eyes on a single point while the body is in motion. Motivate the children to keep their eyes on their dinner.

Start with slow movements and build up to the bigger rotations and lunging swoops. Have the children blink and do big yawns between the activities.



Vestibular  
Visual Perception  
Proprioception



Body Awareness



Coordination  
Reflexes



Gymnastics



Body Control

## Primary Purpose

To help integrate the ocular-vestibular reflex

## Exploration

### How to play

- 1 In this drama inspired activity, the children pretend that they are a raindrop in a cloud. They start by standing up on their tip-toes in the cloud, spreading their arms wide to become a big droplet.
- 2 They then fall to the ground as rain. As they fall, they move their bodies slowly down to the ground, turning as they go, tucking their arms in. When the raindrop splashes on the floor, they lie down and spread out wide into a puddle, river, lake or sea.
- 3 After about 20 seconds, tell the children that the sun is heating them up. They slowly curl up and rise as mist, and finally stand tall in the cloud. They then travel to another area of the room and become a falling raindrop once again.



### Progressions & Variations

Vary the pace of the rainfall and evaporation so that the children can play with combinations of slow and fast falls and rises.

Create groups and allow each of them to choreograph a mini-performance of the life of a raindrop as a dance routine.



Vestibular



Creative Thinking



Reflexes  
Coordination



Dance



Locomotion

### Make it a success

A key to success is the controlled movement of the descent, the spread, and the contraction before the rise.

Encourage the children to exaggerate their landing like a slow-motion capture, expressing the ripple effects or momentary rise and fall of the droplet until it settles and spreads out into a body of water.

Mix up the pace of the activity so that the children don't become bored with the slow repetition element.

### Primary Purpose

To improve balance and integrate labyrinthine reflexes using imagination and movement to tell a story

## How to play

- 1** In a circle as a group of four or five, the children begin by squatting down, imagining that they are skydivers in a plane and are about to leap out.
- 2** On the instruction **'Skydivers Go'**, children imagine they're leaping out from planes to freefall. They lie on their fronts with their forehead on the floor, legs straight back about hip-distance apart, arms stretched out above their head. On the instruction **'Skydivers Display'**, children lift their legs, chests and hands up off the ground and hold hands. You count **'5000, 4000, 3000, 2000, 1000'**.
- 3** When done, call out **'Skydivers Land'**. They roll onto their backs, curl up and hug their knees. Mix the groups up so they are in new positions and repeat.



## Progressions & Variations

To simplify this activity, pair children up. They carry out the same sequence of moves but facing each other.

Extend, or shorten, the times the children spend holding the elevated posture.

## Make it a success

The held posture is key to this. It's quite an effort, so ensure a good warm-up with limbering and stretching is done prior.

Explain the correct position for the freefall: the spine should be extended, the chest lifted, the muscles of the shoulders should lift the arms and the thighs should lift the legs. The eyes should look ahead and slightly down.

The curl at the end is important. Stretching the back muscles in the opposite way will help improve the flexibility and control for the subsequent skydive.

## Primary Purpose

To help inhibit the Moro reflex and enhance awareness of the body in space through controlled movement



Proprioception



Body Control



Reflexes  
Gross Motor Skills



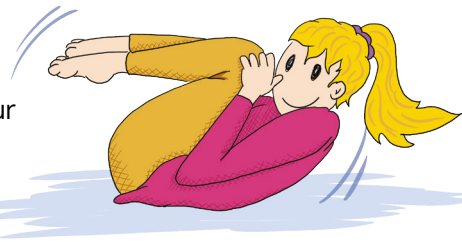
Gymnastics



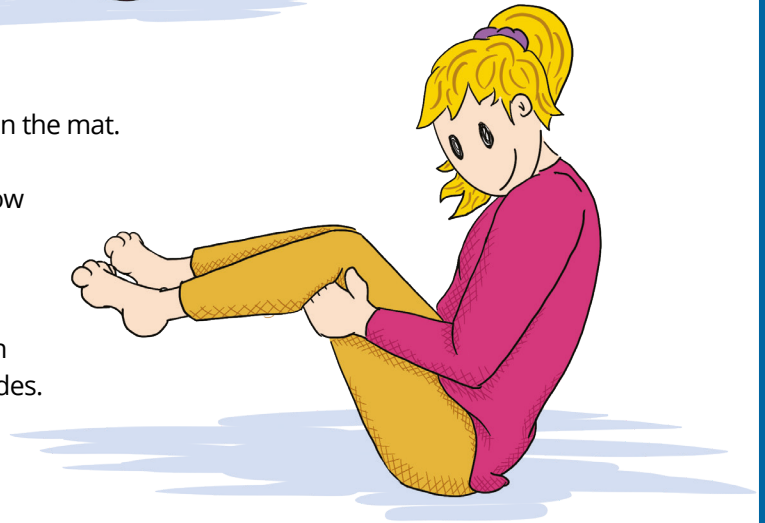
Muscle Tone

## How to play

**1** Lie on your back on a mat, hug your knees with your arms, tuck your chin into your chest and round your back. Begin to slowly rock forwards and backwards, with control. You should feel every part of your spine being massaged on the mat.



**2** Once everyone has practised moving in slow and controlled movements, instruct the children to hold their position at either end of the rocking motion, holding for a count of one, three, or five seconds when balanced on their tailbone or shoulder blades.



**3** Are they able to massage all the bones of the spine during the rocking motion and hold a near motionless pose when either all the way forward or back?

## Progressions & Variations

Working in pairs, one rocks and the other supports their partner as they hold their position. Support is provided only when required and only as much as necessary.

The pairs can rock side-by-side and pause in unison.

Start from a standing position and crouch down to rock. This can be extended to start and finish in a standing position.

## Make it a success

This activity focuses on inhibiting the spinal Galant reflex and assisting midline and homolateral development. Encourage the group to rock in a straight line, feeling the spine as it rocks along the mat.

It is important to keep the chin tucked into the chest and the back rounded.

## Primary Purpose

To improve hand-eye coordination and tracking across the midline



Reflexes  
Coordination  
Gross Motor Skills



Gymnastics



Muscle Tone



Mats



Body Control

## How to play

**1** Everyone begins this activity on their back on a mat, curled up tight like a bud in early spring. Their arms are wrapped around their legs and their legs are pushed down into their chest.

**2** On the instruction '**spring time**', they slowly and gently unfurl their limbs, their petals reaching up to the sun. Their limbs extend high and then wide, ending with their arms and legs wide resting on the floor. They hold this position for 10 seconds.

**3** Then, hearing the instruction '**winter time**', they reverse their movement by slowly contracting their legs and arms and wrapping themselves up tight. Once they have returned to bud form, they hold for 10 seconds before repeating three to five times.



### Progressions & Variations

For those who find the slow pace too challenging, combine a series of quick opening and closing buds, then incremental movements (like a stop-motion animation) before progressing to a slow, controlled sequence.

### Make it a success

This repetitive and rhythmic spatial awareness activity is designed to relax and improve body awareness and inhibit startle reflexes. Focus on a rhythmic opening, holding and closing choreography.

Everyone should extend and contract their movements from the core.

Encourage everyone to feel the warmth and joyfulness of the sun on their soft petals as they extend their limbs wide.

### Primary Purpose

To help integrate primitive startle reflexes and enhance proprioception.



Proprioception



Body Awareness  
Emotional Resilience



Reflexes  
Coordination



Gymnastics



Body Control



Mats

Track 7  
zen



Wired  
For  
Movement

## How to play

**1** Lying down on their back, the children start with their legs together, stretched out, and arms down, palms to the floor. Then, open the legs wide and bring the arms wide, around the body, hands touching above the head. Hold for three seconds and then return and repeat for about 2 minutes to get a rhythm.

**2** Next, change it to combine different coordinated movements, led by your command. Start simple with coordinating just one side, progress to opposing sides and then sequence individual limbs. For example, the left leg and left arm, then left leg and right arm, then individually move right leg first, left arm, left leg, right arm, in order.

**3** Always end with a few free-form whole-body snow angels.



## Progressions & Variations

For children who find this challenging, simplify by moving one limb at a time and progressing to both arms, then both legs, then same sided leg and arm until they can form a snow angel.

Working in threes, the partners work together with one child, applying light resistance to the leg and the other to the arm being moved. One of them needs to give the instruction to move.

When doing this solo, each child has to have their eyes closed and move only on the sound of a clap.

## Make it a success

Movements are to be slow and coordinated. The hands connect at the point the legs fully open, the hands touch the legs when the legs close.

When children are confident with the move, guide them to breathe in during the creation of the snow angel shape and slowly breathe out to return to the starting position.

Emphasis is always on the coordinated movement, the speed of each limb to be constant with every limb.

## Primary Purpose

To improve spatial awareness, left and right coordination and inhibit the spinal Galant reflex.



Proprioception



Reflexes  
Coordination  
Gross Motor Skills



## How to play

**1** Divide everyone into two unequally sized groups: a large group of turtles and a small group of vultures.

**2** The turtles journey around the room, trying to get to an area nominated as the sea. Meanwhile, the vultures flap about, landing close to the turtles who stop and cover away into the safety of their shell, scrunching up their neck, getting low to the floor and folding back onto their thighs.

**3** Once it's safe again, the turtles slowly extend their posture, rise a little, and poke their heads out to look around before moving on. The game ends when a good number of turtles arrive safely in the sea. Remix the groups and repeat.



## Progressions & Variations

Remove the vultures and let the turtles journey to the sea safely, stopping for frequent rests by drawing back into their shell.

Put a beanbag on the back/shell of each turtle. The turtles must keep their beanbag safe; the game ends when the first turtle gets their beanbag to the sea.

## Make it a success

Ensure there is an appropriate warm-up which focuses on limbering the neck and limbs.

Encourage the Turtle group to exaggerate the movement of their neck as they scrunch up into their shell or stretch their neck free to scan the horizon.

The vultures are trying to stop the turtles by landing next to them. The ratio of vultures and turtles is key to keep the game stimulating. Keep the vultures darting about to keep the pace going.

## Primary Purpose

To help integrate a number of primitive reflexes for improved sensory organisation and control of movement.



Vestibular



Body Control



Reflexes  
Coordination



Creative Thinking

## How to play

- 1 Set out a number of lines of mats with a pile of beanbags at one end. Group the children evenly per mat, ready for a relay.
- 2 At the end of the mats there are biscuits (beanbags). You must army-crawl to the biscuits, collect 2 each without being seen and return to your group and tag the next person to go.

The crawling action is this: keeping your body flat, reach far forward with the left hand and, at the same time, bend the right knee up to the side of your body.

- 3 Move by pushing down with the foot and pulling with the hand. When you can't move forward any further, swap over limbs - reach up with your right hand and bend your left knee. Always watch the hand which is in front of you.



### Progressions & Variations

As the children travel, create a clapping rhythm for children to move to. On the first clap, they go to one side and on the next to the other side. Change the speed and tempo to keep it engaging.

This game can be competitive. Stretch out a rope above the mats that mustn't be touched. Children who touch it can only bring one biscuit back. The first team to bring back a certain number of biscuits wins.

### Make it a success

This is a specific neuro-developmental movement pattern, so the focus is on the quality of the coordinated movement. Left leg-right arm pull and push, right leg-left arm pull and push.

Reach far ahead and pull the body with the hand and push down with the foot. The head turns slightly so the eyes track the movement of the forward reaching hand.

Keep the body as flat as possible. The tummy, chest, legs and toes should all be on the floor.



Vestibular



Games



Reflexes  
Coordination  
Gross Motor Skills



Mats  
Beanbags



Body Control  
Locomotion



Body Awareness



### Primary Purpose

Inhibits essential neuro-developmental reflexes to improve whole-body coordination and sensory organisation.

## How to play

- 1** Divide the group into pairs. Kneeling down on all fours and facing each other, the pair places a beanbag between their foreheads and pushes their foreheads together to keep it in place.
- 2** Throughout the challenge, your aim is to keep the beanbag from falling. Begin by rocking forwards and backwards, seeing how far you can extend the movement in all directions.
- 3** When you master this movement, attempt to crawl forwards a few paces, stand up, and lower back down before continuing to rock, all the while without dropping the beanbag.



## Progressions & Variations

Gentle rocking motions with someone tapping out a rhythm for the pair to follow

The pairs can challenge themselves to a full rotation.

With the beanbag ready between their heads, the pairs rock with their eyes closed.

## Make it a success

The rocking is a pre-crawling development movement pattern leading to cross-lateral movements. The forward and backwards motion is pivotal to this activity.

The beanbag should be placed flat between the forehead or crown of the head.

Stability is achieved with a strong base. Palms should be flat on the floor with their fingers spread wide, and their knees should be about hip-width apart or wider.

## Primary Purpose

Using a pre-crawling developmental movement to facilitate lateral and cross-lateral integration.



Proprioception



Teamwork  
Non Verbal



Reflexes  
Coordination



Gymnastics



Body Control  
Locomotion



Beanbags



[www.wiredformovement.com](http://www.wiredformovement.com)