



# Balance Skills

## Preparation

- Ⓜ Make sure the child has the energy and motivation to practise. Stop if they become tired.
- Ⓜ The child needs to have developed good back and tummy muscle strength in order to balance successfully.
- Ⓜ Work on core stability. **See Fizzy handouts.**
- Ⓜ Encourage your child to think about: keeping their head upright; bending at the knees and transferring weight from one foot to another; keeping feet hip distance apart; and use arms to assist in keeping balance.



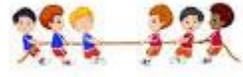
## Activities



- Ⓜ Stepping stones games: walking, jumping and hopping into and over obstacles. The obstacles can be physical items such as a hoop, or drawn on the ground with chalk. Include going backwards and sideways.
- Ⓜ Playing games creating different styles of walking. E.g. fairy steps, giant steps, rabbit jumps, crab walks, moon walks (slow motion).
- Ⓜ Following a taped or chalked line - make it zigzag or curvy, walk in different ways, e.g. on tiptoes, heel-to-toe, backwards, sideways.
- Ⓜ The child holds an item whilst walking along e.g. sweet on a spoon; bean bag on a head; ball on back of a hand
- Ⓜ Use music for rhythmic stepping or marching



- 🕒 Walk along uneven surfaces or objects such as benches, sand or cushions spread along the floor.
- 🕒 Musical statues - stop and hold the position for a count of 10. No holding your breath!
- 🕒 Whilst sitting on an exercise ball, or in high kneeling, bat a balloon to and fro with a partner
- 🕒 Push and pull games – tug of war. Try these in sitting, high kneeling position as well as standing.
- 🕒 Twister game, Hullabaloo or hopscotch
- 🕒 Kicking a ball, stopping it cleanly with the foot before kicking it back.
- 🕒 Trampoline games.
- 🕒 Obstacle courses.



## Practice

- 🕒 Praise and encourage the child throughout, and check they are not holding their breath. Encourage the child to speak or sing out loud to prevent this.
- 🕒 Encourage a good posture, with head looking forwards, back straight, tummy tucked in, and shoulders, arms and knees relaxed.
- 🕒 Talk the child through the balance task, to help them remember a good position and technique, and to be aware of their feet, arms and head position as moving from one posture to another.
- 🕒 Build up balance skills by doing activities in sitting, half kneeling and high kneeling before standing.
- 🕒 Encourage the child to be good at balancing when keeping still, before moving on to balancing whilst moving.
- 🕒 Encourage the child to be good at balancing whilst moving slowly. i.e. slow motion walking is harder than fast pace walking.
- 🕒 Work on activities where the child is alternating between static and dynamic balance.

# Adjustments

- Ⓢ Consider allowing the child to sit for some tasks, in order to have success.  
This could be on a chair, or by perching on a stool.
- Ⓢ If balancing on one leg is too difficult, provide the child with a step on which to rest the raised foot.
- Ⓢ Rather than allowing the child to hold your hand or lean against a wall, try encouraging them to touch a wall with just their fingertips, or hold onto an object held out by you (e.g. a baton/hoop). This way they will not take up too much support and will be able to challenge their balance gradually.

