

A5 – Dynamic balance

Dynamic balance requires the child to develop:

- core postural muscle tone and stability of the trunk, pelvis and shoulder girdles
- joint stability
- static balance
- body awareness
- spatial awareness

Dynamic balance enables us to maintain our balance and movement through space effectively, while completing functional movement activities.

Children with poor dynamic balance may appear clumsy or delayed in motor skills with inadequate righting responses or equilibrium reactions. They may be loose their balance, constantly shift their position or carry out tasks at speed, using the momentum to compensate for poor equilibrium responses.

The **righting reactions** are important in establishing a vertical or upright posture against gravity and a continuous head-torso axis.

The **equilibrium responses** are patterns that maintain balance of the whole body in the dynamic relationship between shifting one's center of gravity through space and the base of support.

A child with poor dynamic balance may be fearful of movement and they will have difficulty keeping up with their peers in the playground and managing stairs or uneven terrain.

Additional adult support will be required to help with increasing strengthening activities as they are unlikely to be motivated to participate initially as balance is a really important component to our sense of wellbeing.

Activities

Introduce the activities at a graded level, within the child's individual level of tolerance and achievement.

- **Obstacle courses** (indoors or out)
Cuild an obstacle course that requires a child to change body position and form of locomotion. Include tunnels, ramps, balance beams, boards, stepping stones, stairs, ladders and monkey bars to facilitate the concepts of in, on, under, over, through and around. Use body rolling over cushions or foam blocks.
- **Animal walks**
Rabbit hops (deep knee bends), crab walk (back and forwards with face up), bear walk (with bottom high), caterpillar walk (take small steps with feet then hands), etc.
- **Outdoor play or soft play**
- **Slides**
Down in seated, on their tummy, head or feet first
- **Swings**
In seated (ideally independently), on their tummy

- **Climbing**

Up, down ladder, frame apparatus, on a trapeze or monkey bars

- **Peanut shaped therapy or gym ball**

Get the child to sit/bounce for short bursts, to develop pelvic or trunk stability.

- Lay prone for floor play to weight bear through upper limbs as in 'wheelbarrow walks'



- **Trampoline**

A kid-sized trampoline is a good investment as jumping is hard work – and so much fun!
Encourage bouncing in sitting, then progress to high kneeling and standing.

Frequency of use: Complete 10-15 minutes sessions every day or at least three times a week.

Monitor the child's level of response (interest and motivation) in the task and adjust accordingly (to simplify or increase) to obtain the 'just right fit' by grading the level of challenge.