

Advice sheet

Core stability

Core Stability is the ability to control the position and movement of the central portion of the body. This mainly involves the muscles in the trunk, shoulders and hips.

Core stability is needed to maintain a good posture and give a stable base to allow the arms, legs and head to move in a coordinated manner.

If your child appears to have difficulties with core stability, you could approach the school and ask that your child participates in two terms of Fun Fit within school.

Fun Fit is an exciting programme delivering motor co-ordination skills and activities into all primary schools across Devon, targeting children with motor co-ordination difficulties. It is designed to improve a child's coordination and underlying postural stability and balance. It is delivered in school for 15 minutes, ideally each day.

Children and young people with core stability difficulties may

- **Struggle** to remain upright in their seat
- **Will tend to** lean on walls or against other people
- **Have difficulty** holding postures against gravity
- **Be unable to** carry out many fine and/or gross motor activities successfully
- **Have difficulties with** activities of daily living such as dressing and undressing
- **Demonstrate** poor concentration and attention.

Suggested activities

The following activities will help improve the muscle strength in the shoulder, hips and trunk and therefore help improve core stability.

Children should be supervised at all times whilst completing these activities and, if indoors, shoes and socks should be removed.

Choose a few of activities each time to help prevent boredom and keep the activities fun.

Chair push ups

Ask the child to sit on a chair holding on to the edge of it, and then push their body up from the seat whilst pushing down using their arms and hands only. Aim to complete 5 – 10 in a row.

Arm spirals

Ask the child to hold both arms out to the side at shoulder height, begin to circle them, starting with small circles and moving to larger circles. When the circles are as large as the child can manage, gradually start reducing the size of the circle to finish with a small circle (approx. 10 circles in total). Start with a few arm circles aiming to get up to 10 with practice.

Wall push ups

Ask the child to face a wall standing approx. one-and-a-half arm's lengths away. Stretch out their arms at shoulder level placing their hands flat on the wall. Encourage them to bring their face close to the wall without moving their feet and keeping their body straight. Finally straighten their arms pushing themselves away from the wall. Repeat 10 times.

Superhero

Get your child to fly like a superhero. Ask the child to lie on the floor on their tummy, with arms outstretched forwards (like a superhero). Start by encouraging them to raise their head off the ground, then their arms and head, finally their head, arms and legs at the same time until the only thing that is touching the floor is their tummy. Hold this position for up to 20 seconds if possible. Encourage them to count as they hold this position.

Bridging

Ask the child to lie on their back, with their body in a straight line. Bend their knees up, whilst keeping their feet on the ground and keeping their arms by their sides. Encourage them to tip their pelvis backwards to flatten their lower back into the floor and finally raising their bottom off the floor keeping their heels on the floor. Hold this position for 10 seconds if possible.

Sit ups

Ask the child to lie on their back with their knees bent up but feet on the floor. Place their hands on their thighs, tuck their chin onto their chest (it is important not to try to overuse the neck muscles when sitting up and keeping the chin tucked in will prevent this). Encourage them to run their hands up towards their knees whilst lifting their head and shoulders off the ground. Do this slowly and try to get a little further up each time you practise.

Plank (push-ups)

Get your child to lie on their tummy on the floor with their hands on the floor at shoulder height and toes on the floor. On the count of 3 have them push up on their hands to straighten their arms and lift their whole body all the way to his toes off the floor



Crab football

Get the child to support their weight on their hands and feet in a crab position. Then they should kick a ball to a partner and back whilst maintaining this position.

Hip walking

Ask the child to sit on the floor with their legs extended and arms crossed. Then move forward by weight shifting from hip to hip whilst moving the leg forward. Keep alternating which leg moves forward.

High Kneeling

Always encourage the child to maintain a good posture in high kneeling whilst carrying out the activities.