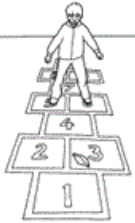


Balance

If a child has balance difficulties you may notice:

- More frequently trips or falls when running or walking compared to their peers
- They may be unable to ride a bike (Every child develops differently with a wide age range of 3 – 8 years old)
- Standing on one leg could be very challenging (On average a child at the age of 4 can balance for 3 - 5 seconds, age 5 for 8 -10 seconds)
- They may struggle to stand still and stay in one place
- Negotiating new unfamiliar environments with uneven surfaces maybe difficult
- Difficulty keeping up their peers in PE
- Difficulty jumping or hopping

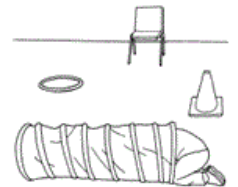
What you can do to support a child



There are lots of different activities that you can do with a child to help them develop these skills and gain confidence. Not all activities engage everyone or are suitable so make sure you choose activities that the child enjoys doing to make it fun and rewarding.

When participating in activities and exercises please ensure the environment is clear from clutter and the child is supervised appropriate to their level of need. More challenging activities will need closer supervision.






- Create an obstacle course: Use chairs, tunnels, blankets, tables, boxes, tyres, ropes etc
- Walking on different surfaces and in different environments. This could be in the playground, around school or during PE.
- Stepping stones: You could do this using chalk outside, to make it easier use large shapes and keep them close together. To increase the difficulty use smaller shapes and further apart
- Play hopscotch
- Ball games: The closer your feet are together the harder it will be to balance
- Musical Statues
- Swimming
- Encourage out of school activities such as ballet, gymnastics or martial arts
- Children's yoga
- Walk along a line e.g. this could be a balance beam, a curb, cracks in the pavement, could even draw a line with chalk and to make it harder make the line wavy.
- Playground equipment such as swinging and climbing frames.
- Jumping on a trampoline.



It is always worth talking to parents to check that the child's vision has been checked, in case this is an issue.

Postural control

To be able to balance you need to have postural control. This is having strong back and tummy muscles which provide a base to help you control your movements and balance easier. Encourage the child to try practice these exercises.

<p>Bridging Lie on your back with your knees bent. Slowly lift your bottom up off the floor as high as you can and hold for 5-10 seconds. Lower back down and repeat 5 – 10 times.</p> <p>Alternatively, lift your bottom up and pass a ball underneath and over you. How many times can you pass the ball? To make it harder increase the size of the ball.</p>	
<p>Superman Lie on your front and lift your head one arm up, hold for a few seconds before relaxing it back down and repeating on the other side. Repeat 5 times on each side</p>	
<p>Standing on one leg Practice standing on one leg for as long as possible and then repeat on the other side. Make sure the area is free from anything that may hurt you if you wobble. If you are very wobbly you may need an adult to be close by to support you and even hold onto your hands to begin with.</p>	
<p>High kneeling Place yourself in high kneeling. You could practice throwing a ball or bean bag into a basket or even to a partner.</p>	
<p>Half kneeling Place yourself in high kneeling with one leg in front and resting on the knee of your opposite leg. Practice maintaining this position. An adult may need to support you if you find this one difficult. Practice throwing and catching a ball or bean bag with a partner.</p>	
<p>Crab walking Sit on the floor with your knees bent and your hands behind you. Lift your bottom up off the floor and maintain this position. To make this harder try walking like a crab, step side to side or forwards and backwards. To make it more interesting have a walking race or play crab football with your friends.</p>	