

Top Tips to Support Your Child's Development

Physical Development: Moving and Handling

Teaching Your Child to Sit - activities to support the development of strength and skills needed for sitting.

Ensure your child is ready and has the physical skills (holding their own neck up, developed trunk muscles and balance skills) needed to begin to sit.

See Top Tips on developing the skills to crawl also, where ideas around 'tummy time' to support the development of full body strength will also support the development of skills needed to sit.

You may want to ask a Physiotherapist and/or Occupational Therapist for advice and support around positioning.

1. Provide opportunities for your child to sit on your lap to enable them to practice keeping their head upright whilst fully supported. Play bouncing games whilst holding your child's hands, or play 'pat-a-cake' games.
2. Support your child to develop balance; play games whilst sitting behind your child, giving them full support. For example, sing rhymes such as 'row the boat' whilst rocking back and forth or roll balls / cars.
3. Place your child on their back and slowly pull up to a sitting position whilst holding their hands, or placing your hands under your child's hand and wrap your fingers around their wrist, this will support muscle development and build strength.
4. Once your child can hold their head, use supportive seating or support your child to sit by surrounding them with cushions and pillows, supervise your child whilst doing so and provide toys / stimulation to encourage your child to sit, extending the period of time sitting gradually so that your child can practice and increase their strength.
5. When your child is able to sit for longer periods, they may begin to sit in a 'tripod' position, with their hands out in front of them on the floor for stability. Place cushions/ pillows nearby to support if your child is still a little 'wobbly' in their balance.
6. Use toys and 'treasure baskets' to explore whilst in the sitting position. ('Treasure Baskets' are often made up of a selection of different objects from the real world for your child to explore and discover e.g. sponges, wooden spoon, containers, ribbons, variety fabric, etc.) Ensure you supervise and support your child during this play.



7. Try placing toys a short distance away from your child to encourage them to reach out for objects and then return to their sitting position. Also try placing toys in different places around them to encourage your child to reach in different directions.



8. Support your child to play or share a book whilst side-sitting.