

**Gross Motor
Activities**
for
Young
Children
with
Special Needs

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Auxter

GROSS MOTOR ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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A supplement to:
Auxter • Pyfer • Huettig
Principles and Methods of
Adapted Physical Education and Recreation

Tenth Edition



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Carol Huettig, Jean Pyfer, and David Auxter

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PREFACE

This handbook of more than 200 activities and suggested songs has been developed as a resource for physical educators, adapted physical educators and early childhood educators serving young children. Children of all ability levels will enjoy these child-tested activities, but most importantly, children with developmental delays and disabilities will derive significant benefit. Each activity has been carefully selected to promote central nervous system development.

Equilibrium

The development of equilibrium is critical in the development of motor function. Equilibrium is essential in maintaining one's balance while rolling, crawling, creeping, walking, running or when performing any other motor activity. The activities included in this section have been selected to ensure that children develop these critical postural reactions while having fun.

Sensory Stimulation and Discrimination

For children to learn to discriminate among different types of touch, body movements, sounds, and sights, it is necessary for them to experience a variety of these sensations. Activities in this section are designed to stimulate the tactile, vestibular, proprioceptive, auditory, and visual systems.

Body Image

A well-developed body image helps children to understand their movement capabilities. The activities in this section help children identify their individual body parts, develop a whole body concept, and practice using their body in a variety of ways.

Basic Locomotor Skills

Mastery of basic locomotor patterns is required before a child can participate successfully in play, games, leisure, recreation and sport activities and are critical to activities of daily living, as well. The activities in this section provide children the opportunity to practice modifying the variables of time, space, force and flow of their movements.

Motor Planning

The motor planning activities in this section help children learn to anticipate, predict, and plan their movements.

Object Control Skills

The ability to receive and propel objects in the environment is critical for many play, games, leisure, recreation and sport activities. The activities in this section give children the chance to develop basic eye-hand, eye-foot, and eye-body control skills.

Cross-Lateral Integration

Cross-lateral integration is the ability to coordinate the two sides of the body during movement. Until this integration develops, children tend to use each side of the body independently and have problems with any activities requiring the use of their limbs at or across the midline (center) of the body. The activities in this section require the child to continually move beyond the midline.

Aerobic Fitness

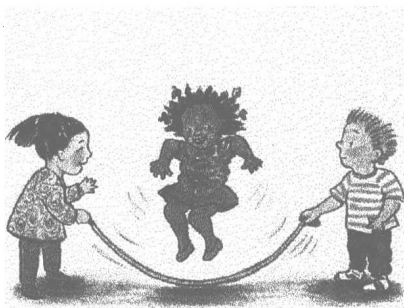
Cardiovascular endurance is a critical component of wellness and health. The activities, particularly useful for in-seat and "circle-time" activities, focus on aerobic activities that will enhance cardiovascular endurance.

Animal Actions

Young children like to "pretend to be" animals. These animal actions help children develop equilibrium, sensory discrimination, body image, motor planning, locomotor competency and strength/fitness. The activities are included throughout the book.

Cooperative Play and Games

Cooperative games are included to enable young children with a variety of abilities to work together. Parallel and cooperative play are developmentally appropriate for young children.



The delightful clip art is from www.arttoday.com.

We hope this handbook will prove to be a useful tool. We encourage you to contact us or our publisher, Mc-Graw Hill, with any comments or suggestions for improvement.

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**GROSS MOTOR ACTIVITIES
FOR YOUNG CHILDREN WITH
SPECIAL NEEDS**

SUPINE EQUILIBRIUM

Struggling Turtle

Ask the child to lie on her back and pretend to struggle to roll over, by alternating flexing/extending arms and legs. Throughout, the head should be tucked to the chest. When the turtle "struggles" hard enough, the teacher can help roll the turtle over onto her stomach. Before doing the activity, read a story about a turtle or, better still, let them watch a turtle stuck on his back.

Protect the Treasure

Place a bean bag or koosch ball on the child's tummy. Ask the child to lie on his back until the "robber" tries to steal the treasure. To keep from losing the treasure, the child should "tuck" according to ability. For example, one child may just tuck his chin to protect the treasure, while another may have to tuck into a ball to protect the treasure.

Balloon Bobble/Group Bobble

While lying on her back, with head tucked to chest, ask the child to keep a balloon (or a bunch of balloons tied together) up in the air, using hands, feet, elbows, and knees. If the child is unable to perform the activity alone, the teacher may have to help by bouncing the balloon off the child's body. Several children can do this together with their feet in the center of a circle.

Supine Scooter Play

Involve the child in any type of supine scooter activity with the chin tucked. Use large scooters for children with poor equilibrium and poor muscle tone.

Puppy on a Leash

Ask the child to lie on his back on a scooterboard holding one end of a rope. A teacher or another child can pull the "puppy" around the room.

Crossing the Alligator Pit

Suspend a rope over the child at arms length from her chest. Ask the child, lying supine on a scooterboard, to pull herself, hand over hand, the length of the rope, headfirst.

Recliner Cycling

Ask the child to lie on his back and pedal his legs like he is riding a bicycle [chin tucked]. This can be done with partners as well. Ask two children to lie down with the balls of their feet together and bicycle.

Rock 'n Roll

When working with a child with profound disabilities, lie down and hold the child on your chest, with his back on your stomach. Hold the child tightly and roll, gently, from side to side.

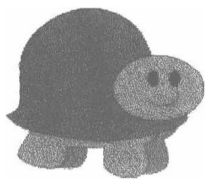
PRONE EQUILIBRIUM

Superchild

Ask the child to lie on her tummy on a scooterboard and, holding arms and head up in the air [like Superman flying] "fly" after a teacher's push.

Peeking Turtle

The child lies on his tummy, chin tucked to his chest, with his head covered by a small bean bag chair. The turtle "peeks" out by lifting his head.



Hungry Alligators

Ask the children to crawl on their stomachs. Ask one child to be the "hungry" alligator. On cue, the "hungry" alligator tries to bite the others [using hands/arms extended and clapping to simulate biting action]. Each "bitten" alligator then becomes a "hungry" alligator until all are bitten. [This is great on scooters, too.]

Tummy Ball Balance

Ask a child to lie on her tummy over the top of a large ball with hands and feet touching the floor. Ask the child to try to lift her hands and, then, feet off the floor.

Sneaky Snake

Ask the children to lie on the floor [on tummy on floor or scooterboard]. Call a child's name and repeat the chant: "Here comes a snake, crawling right to me, A long, thin wiggly [child's name] snake I see."

Bean Bag Chair "Swimmer"

Ask the child to lie on his tummy on top of a bean bag chair. Encourage the child to swim using his arms and legs.

Swimmer

Ask the child to lie in the center of a parachute held by friends and teachers. The child pretends to swim on "little ripples" and then "big waves."

Clapping Seal

The child pulls her lower body along the floor, while supporting her body in a push-up position. The child stops, occasionally to rock and "clap fins" and make a seal "honk." If the child is unable to support self in this position, the child's chest could be supported by a bolster or pillow.

Wheelbarrow Walk

Supporting part of the child's body weight on a bolster, rolled-up mat, or pillow, ask the child to walk on his hands while the teacher holds the child just above the knees. [Child can walk on his forearms.]

SITTING EQUILIBRIUM**Sitting "Tug-of-War"**

Ask two children to sit on the floor, facing each other, and play "tug-of-war" with a ball, rope, or soft toy. Modify the activity by asking the children to sit on a rolled mat or on pillows while playing "tug."

Tandem Seat Walk

Have two children sit in a straddle position, one behind the other; the child in back cradles the child in front. Ask them to shift their weight together to "shuffle" while sitting. The teacher can seat a child on her legs to teach the "shuffle."

Row. Row. Row Your Boat

Ask two children to sit, facing each other, with crossed legs. Holding hands, sing the song with the following modifications:

- Row, row, row your boat [moving front and back],
- Tilt, tilt, tilt your boat [moving front and back while tilting left and right],
- Rock, rock, rock your boat [rock all over].

Sitting Bounce

Ask a child to sit on a large therapy or playground ball, while holding her teacher's hands. The teacher should move the hands to force the child into "disequilibrium." Then the child must regain an upright, sitting position.

Humpty Dumpty

Ask the children to sit and tuck into a tight ball, while they chant: "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall...Humpty Dumpty had a great fall...[the children tumble over]...All the queen's horses and all the queen's men...Couldn't put Humpty together again." [The children try to roll -- egg-like -- to regain a sitting position].

**HANDS AND KNEES EQUILIBRIUM****Robin Hood**

Ask two children to assume all-fours positions on hands and knees next to each other, each facing the opposite direction. Shifting weight, each child should attempt to push the other child off balance.

Ball Straddle

Ask a child to lie over the top of a big playground ball or therapy ball, keeping hands and knees in contact with the ground. Ask the child to lift hands and knees, individually at first, and then all four, off the ground.

Puppy with a Sore Paw

The child starts on hands and knees and then moves on only three of the body parts, while whimpering.

Cow Eating Her Cud

Ask the child to move on all fours, while pushing a bean bag or koosch ball with his nose. The child should stop every so often to "chew his cud."

Bunny Hop

The child assumes a hands and knees position [with lower leg in contact with the floor]. The child moves both hands forward together and then pulls (slides) both legs up towards the hands [a homologous movement].

Buckin' Bronco

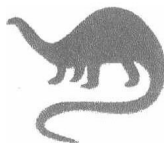
Ask the child to assume an all-fours position. Put a small bean bag chair, pillow, or large bean bags on the child's back and ask the child to "buck" to get the "cowgirl" off her back.

Dizzy Dog

The child creeps on hands and knees, but crosses her right arm in front of the left one, in an "X." Change the lead arm.

Dinosaur Walk

The child moves on all-fours, homolaterally [right hand and right knee, then left hand and left knee], while the children chant "Di-No-Saur," "Di-No-Saur."

**Angry Kitty**

The child assumes an all-fours position on the floor. Hissing loudly, the "kitty" presses his back up to form an arch. Ask the child to hold the position while "hissing" and then to relax. This can be turned into a delightful game by letting one child be a "puppy"...enjoy the "hissing" and "barking."

The Bear Went Over the Mountain

The child moves on all fours using hands and feet. The bear lumbers [right hand and right foot move together, left hand and left foot move together] while singing the "Bear Went Over the Mountain."

Froggy

The child assumes a semi-squat position and springs forward to another semi-squat position. Do not allow the child to move into full flexion at the knee. This is much more fun if the child springs from lily pad [carpet square or poly-spot] to lily pad while shouting "ribbid."



Mad Mule

The child places his hands on the floor and gently kicks his legs up into the air, supporting his body weight on his hands. If the child is unable to support his body weight, modify the activity by having the child lie over the top of a bolster or large therapy ball.

KNEELING EQUILIBRIUM

Mirror

Ask two children to face each other while kneeling. Have one child move while the other "mirrors" the action. [It may be necessary to let the children practice moving while looking into a real mirror.]

Palm Pressure

Kneeling, ask two children to play "mirror" but this time their palms should be touching. They try to push each other over.

Pillow Fight

Ask two children to kneel and, using pillows, try to push each other off balance.

STANDING EQUILIBRIUM

Balance Board

Ask the child to stand on a balance board and try to keep both edges of the board from touching the floor.

Ostrich

Ask the child to stand on one foot and recite: "Silly bird, silly bird...one foot down. Silly bird, silly bird...Don't fall down."

GENERAL EQUILIBRIUM ACTIVITIES

Magic Carpet Ride

Ask the child to assume one of the following positions: supine, prone, sitting, or kneeling on a mat, blanket, or quilt. Grasp the edge of the mat and pull the child about as if on a magic carpet. Several children can sit on the mat and several can help pull.

Crazy Sidewalk

Place soft objects [bean bag chairs, pillows, rolled up towels] under a quilt or blanket so the surface of the mat is lumpy, uneven, and variable. Ask the child to perform a locomotor skill with which the child is comfortable: crawl, creep, hands and knees walk, knee walk, walk, run, jump and, for variety, do each of these backwards.



Parachute Rock n' Roll

Ask the children and adults to sit around a parachute or a colored sheet. The children on the outside grasp the parachute, lean back and make "little ripples" or "big waves." Ask a child to roll, crawl, creep, hands and knees walk, etc._ across the parachute.

SENSORY STIMULATION AND DISCRIMINATION TACTILE ACTIVITIES

Partner Massage

Teach children to give each other a massage. Introduce deep pressure along the long bones of the body [spine and long bones in the legs and arms]. When applying deep pressure, the child should use the fleshy part of the thumbs to stroke the length of the bone.

Texture Rub

Rub the child with materials that have different textures [silk, feathers, sponges, brushes, fake animal fur, flannel]. At first, introduce something very rough and then something very smooth.

Taco

Ask several children to lie on one-half of a parachute and pretend to be meat, cheese, or beans for the taco. Ask other children to add the filling [jalapeno peppers, tomatoes, cheese, etc...using bean bags, koosch balls]. Then pull the empty half of the parachute over the top of all the children.

Hot Dog

Stuff a child between two bean bag chairs. Add condiments. Let other children start to nibble from each end.