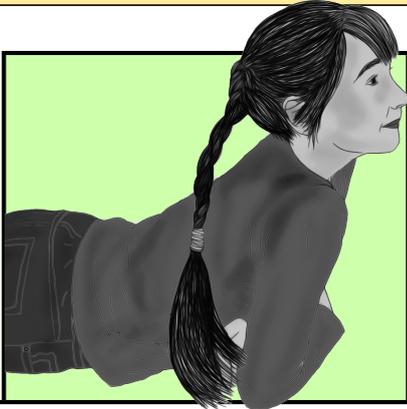


POSTURAL CONTROL AND CORE STABILITY EXERCISES

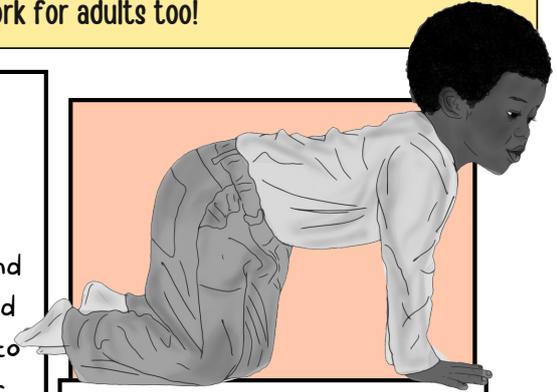
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

In order to comfortably maintain an upright posture, we need strong core muscles. The lack of opportunity to build these muscles and the sensory systems that help us move in the early years may result in slumping, fidgeting, difficulty balancing, or leaning on one hand while working. The following activities will help to improve the stomach and back muscles as well as strength at the neck, shoulder and hip girdle. These work for adults too!



Support your child to have as much 'tummy time' as possible. You can ask your child to lie on their tummy to play games, cards, draw or watch tv. If you can, get down with them and lay opposite, so they are lifting their head to look at you too. Ideally they will be lying supported by their arms.

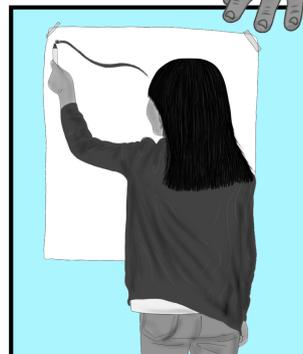
Commando crawling games – you can set up obstacle courses together, support your child to commando crawl under chairs, blankets or tunnels. Have them find objects hidden in low places around the room. Or you could pretend to be slithering snakes along the floor.



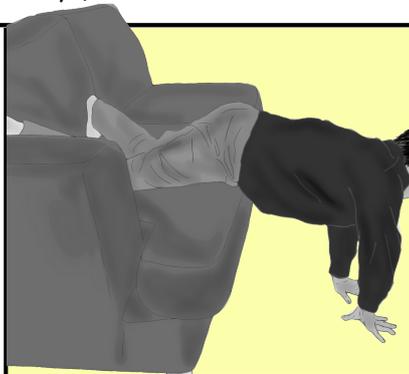
4-point kneeling (hands and knees on floor) – Ask your child to pretend to be an animal and then to carry a bean-bag or toy on their back whilst moving around the room. Support your child to walk on all fours over cushions or through a play tunnel. Try lifting one arm and the opposite leg – time how long can they can hold it up for.



Play 'hands first - feet last' where your child has to get out of bed (if it is a low enough bed) or sofa by always putting their hands on the floor first and walking out so that their feet are the last body part to touch the floor.



Other wonderful activities that can help build core strength are climbing – trees, climbing frames or climbing walls, swimming, dancing and horse riding.



Encourage your child to work standing or kneeling against upright surfaces: For example: drawing on easels, wiping chalkboards or white boards, cleaning windows, cleaning the car, mirrors etc. These are good strengthening activities



GUIDELINES

- Never force the child to do these activities, as they will be of no benefit if they don't enjoy them
- Short sessions incorporated into daily routine are best
- Be guided by the child into changing the sequence and/or varying the activities
- Safety first: Always risk assess the area you are working in and the child's suitability for the task on any given day. If your child finds the first two activities challenging, do not move on to the others until they are more stable
- Use exercise mats in the activity area for a soft landing in case of falls
- Always make it fun and be with them! Do the activities too if you can or verbally encourage and support them.