



Physical Activities Pre-School Children

(Adapted from article by Angelo Montagnino)

This booklet contains numerous ideas for getting children who are blind or partially sighted active. It includes activities designed to encourage the child to explore his/her world. These activities will build and strengthen gross motor skills, as well as overall physical literacy.



A few tips before you start:

Use Descriptive Verbal Instructions

Since the main avenue of learning for many children with low vision is through hearing, verbal instructions should be given when demonstrating a skill. Give clear, concise and consistent directions. Say what it is you are actually doing in body-oriented language. For example, when teaching a child to hop, say, "Stand on your left foot, raise your right foot, and jump in the air on your left foot." Cite large landmarks in the playing area and elsewhere to guide a child with low vision: "Walk to the exit door, turn toward the window." Use tactual, hands-on demonstrations with verbal instruction.

Explore Movement

Encourage movement exploration. Focus on how the body moves by bending, stretching, turning, swinging, and curling the body, by itself, as well as in relationships to objects and other people. Help children to become aware of



their body and the ways it can move. A good movement vocabulary will help the child learn new skills more efficiently.

Safety

Ensure the child knows how to **jump**, **land**, and **roll** while standing in place, while moving, and while jumping off equipment. This is a good safety skill, and the children will become more confident knowing that they can handle themselves on a spill.



Pre-school Activities:

1. Opening and closing doors
2. Carrying objects: one hand, two hands, large and light, small and heavy, etc.
3. Crawling (tunnels, over mats, mats on top of obstacles, up and down ramps, etc.)
4. Walking trips (over gravel, rocks, grass, sand, dirt, cement and blacktop, carpet, tile, over logs, up and down ramps, stairs, puddles, large boulders, logs, chains, etc.)
5. Examine and climb trees
6. Climbing (stairs, climbing equipment, boards, rolled mats, tables, benches, etc.). Climb up, down, across, on incline, decline, under, turn, etc.



7. Swings: Be pushed or twirled, on tummy and seated, push with hands and feet (if low enough), twirl, sit sideways (one foot on each side of swing, etc.)
8. Swing by hands and feet (swung by 2 adults)
9. Expose to wheel toys
10. Rocking horse, teeter-totter
11. Punch ball attached to wrist
12. Suspend balloon from ceiling so it touches child's head. Encourage play, tapping turning, holding
13. Various size and shape balloons—feel, rub on face and hands, adult makes speech sounds or vibrations on balloon
14. Shopping bags or boxes to carry and empty objects out
15. Sit and twirl in a swivel chair
16. Tinker toys
17. Boxes to use as tunnels or to crawl through, feel all sides, poke fingers through a hole and grab someone's hand or talk to from outside box
18. Construct a balance beam from a long, 10-12 inch wide board, placing it on two very low supports and scoot, walk or straddle beam
19. Hang on a suspended rope swing
20. Roller skate or get a free ride on various types of wheel vehicles including a tricycle. Pull the vehicle with a rope, with child on it or doing the pulling
21. Mat work for simple balances. Place child on hands and knees, teacher sits and lifts child's legs one at a time, etc. Simple stunts—roll like a log, etc.
22. Ball skills—bouncing, twirling, kicking, rolling ball against a wall and catch, roll toward a sound (knock down target)



23. Sand or sandbox play (you can even use plastic particles or pebbles). Provide scoop, funnel, shovel, pail, cardboard rolls, milk carton, spoons, sifters, cans or jars—demonstrate play

Activities using “Manipulative” Toys

1. Toys: Old spinning tops (listen, feel it), Slinky, Jack in the Box, Fisher Price Peek-a-Boo, etc.
2. Dance movements to music—walk sideways left and right, forward and backward, hold hands in a circle
3. Hop up and down
4. Hand puppets
5. Play with large blocks or cubes, foam, coffee cans with plastic lids, shoe boxes, paper cups, etc.
6. Inner tubes or tires—roll it, crawl through, walk on it, jump on or climb in, sit on, step in and out, line up several tires or tubes or tie together
7. Water play—large basin or sink or small pool filled with water and a number of materials or toys: sponges, boats, rubber duckies. Wash items, including rubbing and squeezing.
8. Water pistol to squirt self or others, objects such as balloons or items that will make a sound when water strikes them, fill a cup, etc.
9. Wastebasket play—toss a ball or beanbag into it from one foot, two feet, etc.
10. Ring toss—use a large hoop or hula hoop, drop it on target, go through it
11. Wagon play—fill it up, empty it, get pulled, pull it, ride on it, push it with one leg
12. Make a ball out of newspaper



13. Using various climbing equipment or obstacles—teach up, down forward, backward, sideways, left, right, around over, under, on top of, underneath, behind, in front of, between, in and out

14. Play "find the missing objects"—crawl around and find them all over floor, locate hidden objects

15. Smell and feel shaving cream, clay, whipped cream, crazy foam, silly string

39. Body lotion, powders, etc.

16. Bubbles: Feel, break, follow

17. Examine and identify textures of food and articles

18. Examine and identify scents of food and articles



Here are More Activities

1. Use of knock-down clown type object. Place next to child, tap or move it against body, encouraging grasping and knocking.

2. Suspend a balloon or beach ball with string and tape and sway it back and forth, against face, tap it, rub it, encourage child to do the same. Possibly insert rice or other small sound-making item in balloon or beach ball. Turn it, hold it and make speech sounds or vibrations, rub it on face and hands. Small bells can be attached to the string.

3. Suspend a bell or string of bells. Try to stimulate a reaction to the sound.



4. Bounce or roll beach ball past child or at child, or use soft bell ball.
5. Open or close doors with child.
6. Carry or hold objects, one hand or two, vary size and weight.
7. Crawling and climbing. Roll up a mat, put student on it, under it. If needed, help student move—roll off, get on, get out, climb over, etc.
8. Walking trips (over gravel, rocks, grass, sand, dirt, cement and blacktop, carpet, tile, over logs, up and down ramps, stairs, puddles, large boulders, logs, chains, etc.).
9. Examine trees, shrubs, stairs, tables, benches, play equipment. Encourage moving around by self, encourage use of exploring and trailing with hands.
10. Expose to wheel toys or toys that roll and have movable parts.
11. Attach punch balloon with elastic to wrist or ankle.
12. Expose to rocking horse, teeter-totter, tumble about (even if only one hand is on it).
13. Sit and twirl in swivel chair or sit/lie down on a wheeled vehicle and be pulled, pushed, etc. Include a 3-wheel vehicle if possible.
14. Shopping bags and boxes—fill up with items and take out.
15. Mat work—place student on hands and knees, teacher sits and lifts student's legs one at a time, etc. Simple stunts—roll like a log, etc.
16. Tinker toy play—construct your own with milk cartons, wooden spools rolled up with newspaper balls, etc.
17. Clubhouse box—with a big cardboard box, crawl through it or sit in it, feel the sides, poke fingers through the hole and grab a finger, talk to from outside the box.
18. Balance beam activities



Use a regular low balance beam or a long narrow 6-12 inch wide rectangular board supported by two bases, probably several inches high.

- Walk forward and backward placing one foot in front of the other
- Walk sideways on the beam
- Crawl across
- Scoot across
- Walk across with one foot on and one foot off balance beam
- Straddle balance beam
- Walk up balance beam used as an incline plane (one end of beam supported by box)
- Walk down inclined balance beam

19. Play with an inner tube or tire—walk on it, step in it and out, sit in it, tie it to anything and crawl through, make a tire swing (several inches off the ground and lie on it with tummy).

20. Encourage rolling, patting, spinning or just examining a ball.

21. Encourage sand box play to teach use of hands, shoveling, scooping, etc.

22. Toys—old spinning tops (listen, feel it), Slinky, Jack in the Box, Fisher Price Peek-a-Boo, etc.

23. Water play—large basin or sink or small pool filled with water and a number of materials or toys: sponges, boats, rubber duckies. Wash items, including rubbing and squeezing.

24. Water pistol to squirt self or others, objects such as balloons or items that will make a sound when water strikes them, fill a cup, etc.

25. To music—encourage movement of body parts in many combinations.

26. Place student on any possible moving apparatus from a hammock to a rocking chair and provide movement.

27. Pushing—push crumbs, anything with hand, off table and into a container.

28. Lick a lollipop.



29. Blow a candle, paper strips or balloon tied to a string.

30. Provide as many new experiences and toys as possible.

Encourage as much movement in relation to obstacles as possible. Use verbal terms to left and right, sideways, around, over, under, on top of, go in, sit in, sit under, etc.

If needed, provide sound by tapping or any other means to assist or motivate in climbing or moving or finding object to catch, grab, strike, kick, push or throw to a person or object.

Exploration of the world around them is key for children to grow and learn. Encourage children to try new activities and experiences. As long as basic safety measures have been put in place, children should be encouraged to step outside of their comfort zones and explore.



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