



# JANUARY 2025

## Let's get moving

Happy New Year. We hope this finds you and your family warm and well, having enjoyed the winter break. The tradition of the new year, brings along hopes and dreams for the year ahead. One of mine, is to keep moving and active, which I hope to instill in my children. Over the holidays we set up simple obstacle courses in the basement, which they loved! We spent 10-30minutes down there (even when I didn't want to) and they loved the challenge of trying to beat their own times.

It made me think about how you can do some of these tasks outside of the gymnasium. First, throwing and catching - this simple task works on hand eye coordination as well as the ability to react and concentrate - essential skills for the classroom. My three-year-old started with her hands together and I basically dropped the ball into her closed arms. As she got more confident, I stepped back and reminded her to watch the ball. My five-year-old had to take a step back each catch – if they threw it badly, it affected their time, so this was a motivator to concentrate. In class, you could take a bean bag and stand on the carpet and practice this. If the children are older, throw it to them standing behind their seats. If they drop it, they sit down. Last person standing – wins.

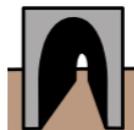
We practiced balancing by climbing on to a bench before jumping down and going through a tunnel. No help, just balance and crawl. These types of movements develop body awareness - through balance and coordination. They practice learning more about their body in space and the body's ability to automatically sense location, movement and action, essential for life. You can get children to play follow the leader around the class going over chairs and under tables.

Half way through, they had to stop at the top of a little step and throw a ball into a wagon... Throwing is a great way to develop gross motor skills as your child can practice their over and underarm throwing. Aiming for a target is also a great way to improve hand-eye coordination. Did you know that math skills can be developed through reaching the targets, so this basic activity is not only good for motor skills, but also the building blocks for mathematics. Maybe they could take scrap paper and throw it in to the garbage can.

We have also done jumping, crawling and hop scotch which they have loved, we had so much fun as a family, it kept us moving over the winter break and didn't take too much effort and time, any of this can be done in a hallway to add variety to the walk to or from the classroom.

If you want ideas on how to set up obstacle courses, or have concerns about any children in your class having difficulties completing obstacle courses, please get in touch. The team are here and ready to help.

Wishing you the very best for 2025.



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