

P.E. Activities for Junior and Senior School Children who have Dyspraxia

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Introduction

These activities and games can be enjoyed in PE lessons, or in clubs and groups. They have been chosen because they are fun for all children; and are particularly helpful for those who have co-ordination difficulties.

These children benefit particularly from building self-confidence and self-esteem through physical exercise. Play should be pitched at a level where they can succeed, as good esteem ensures that each child is happy to join in and build on their success.

It is important to remember:

- Always give as much praise and positive encouragement as possible.
- To start with, carry out only a few repetitions. Begin with ten repetitions and build up slowly by adding five each week. These children often have poor stamina.
- Always ensure that you start with an activity where the child can succeed – e.g. catching a beanbag, before progressing to a tennis ball.
- Make sure that you do not give too many instructions at one time.
- Ask the child to repeat the instructions to you before they carry them out and make sure they understand them all.
- Give plenty of time for changing clothes, shoes etc.
- If you ask the class or group to choose teams, make sure that specific children are not left out. You could ask the child who is never chosen to be the team leader; then ask each child once they have been chosen to pick the next team member.

Group activities for warm up

- Dodge ball (use a soft ball!)
- Stuck in the mud
- Duck Duck Goose
- Throw or kick balls to different people while running around a room. The person throwing could call the other person's name then throw the ball to them.
- Run, hop and jump around the room.

To help with shoulder control

Bunny hops: The child leans forwards and places his hands on the edge of a small stool. Then ask him to jump from one side to the other, keeping his hands flat on the stool.

Crabs: Practise the crab position: walking forwards and backwards and kicking balls with each leg. The hands should be pointing away from the body. The whole class can play a crab football game; or a crab relay race, crab walking around cones.

Arms & hands: Ask the child to put both his arms out and to flap his hands gently up and down; or make small circles with his hands ten times.

On all fours: Ask the child to get in the crawling position. Then ask him to move his face down towards the floor, aiming for a spot between his hands, then push back up to the crawling position. His elbow should not touch the floor and his weight should be kept forward, over the hands.

Other Beneficial Activities:

- Press-ups against the wall. Make sure the elbows stay off the wall
- Wrestling with another child, both kneeling down and with arms extended
- Writing words in the air and another child guessing what was written
- Writing on the blackboard
- Rowing
- Bowling

To help with pelvic control

Bridging: The child lies on his back with knees bent up and feet on the ground. Encourage him to lift his bottom slowly off the floor without it swaying, keeping his knees and feet together. This can be made into a game by asking the children to lie next to each other. Lifting their bottoms together, they can pass a small object down the line underneath the 'bridges'.

Leg lifting: Lying on his side, with the top leg straight and the under leg bent, he lifts the top leg slowly in the air and slowly lowers it again, keeping it straight. Turn over and repeat on the other side.

Kneeling and catching: Half-kneeling (i.e. with the bottom raised and one knee raised), practise catching bean bags, koosh or small balls and throwing them to another person.

Knee walking: Walk forwards and backwards on the knees. Have races.

Jumping: Jump forwards, backwards and over small objects.

Other Beneficial Activities

- Trampolining
- Walking
- Cycling
- Walking over uneven surfaces (e.g. mats, bean bags on the floor)
- Step ups

To help with eye/hand co-ordination

Throwing & Catching: Use a ball that will give the child success, e.g. bean bag, koosh, juggling ball, large ball or tennis ball. He can practise throwing and catching the ball with his dominant hand and bouncing the ball to another person and catching it with his dominant hand. If he has difficulty, use a hoop to bounce the ball in so that they learn to position the bounce to reach the other person.

They can also practise throwing bean bags or tennis balls and catching them themselves, with two hands or with the dominant hand. Then, ask them to touch their head between throwing and catching. When this becomes easy, he can progress to touching his tummy before catching; touching his tummy twice; touching his head and tummy; and touching his head, shoulder and tummy.

Bat & ball games: The aim is for the child to be able to bat the ball repeatedly. Children who have great difficulty could have the ball thrown to them first. A balloon may be easier to bat than a ball. The child can also bat against the wall, either by himself or to another person. The ball should bounce on the floor before the child bats it.

Other beneficial Activities

- Golf
- Rounders
- Tennis
- Basketball
- Netball
- Badminton

To help with eye/foot co-ordination

Direct the ball: The child kicks the ball into different sized goals and through tunnels.

Skittles: Kicking the ball to knock down skittles can help a child who has great difficulty with direction.

Touch objects: The child stands on a step, or a spot on the floor and is asked to touch different objects with their foot.

Floor pianos: Play-mats.

Jumping: The child jumps onto specific spots or points in a room.

Instruct to touch: The child touches different objects when instructed – for example, different coloured bean bags.

Following lines: The child walks on specific lines around a room.

Ladders: the child walks in and out of the spaces between rungs on a ladder, laid on the floor.

To help with visual and verbal short term memory

Following instructions: The child carries out activities which they are instructed to do verbally or visually. Initially, only three to five instructions should be given.

Memory songs: e.g. ‘When I went Shopping with Grandma’.

Chinese Whispers

Group activities: e.g. one group is asked to make up a story which involves carrying out directions and instructions. The other group must act the story out.

Twister type games

Obstacle courses: Ask the child to complete five or six tasks, e.g. walking along the bench, jumping up to the hoop, jumping in and out of the hoop, doing ten step-ups, throwing a ball in the air and clapping hands before catching it. Increase the number of tasks as the child improves, or ask them to do the tasks in reverse order.

To help with planning

Obstacle courses: e.g. going through tunnels, under chairs, over furniture.

Climbing frames and wall bars

Making up games: and instructing the other children how to play, what the rules are and who wins.

Group games: Each group makes up and obstacle course of equipment for the other team to try out.

Map reading

To help with stamina

Trampolining

Crab Football

Races

Step ups

Bicycling

Swimming

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