

Motor Concepts

Postural Control

You may hear the terms core strength and postural control interchangeably. Core strength is the strength of the underlying muscles of the torso which support postural alignment. Postural alignment is the ability to hold the body in a controlled position against gravity. They work together for us to engage in activities with motor control and endurance. The muscles of our torso, hips and shoulders also provide a basis for motor skills requiring hand and finger control, such as writing, drawing, using tools and functional tasks such as dressing. Head and eye control is also supported by postural strength and endurance. Postural control is inter related to attention and focus. It is such an important aspect of development so it is important that we help our children work towards developing strength and endurance in these muscles groups.

Some indicators that you may need to focus on developing further postural control:

- Quick to fatigue, lacking endurance
- Slouching against walls or furniture when standing or lying on the floor rather than sitting
- W sitting
- Propping at table with head in hands
- Frequent wiggling and changing of position
- Struggling with single leg balance
- Avoiding motor challenges such as playground equipment
- General challenges with gross motor skills

Tools and strategies which support postural control:

- Different seating options – to either encourage engagement of postural muscles or to support a child so that they can focus on other skills.
 - Move n sit cushions, Hoki stools, ball chairs: encourage engagement of muscles
 - Hug a chair, floor chairs: provide support
 - Standing desks or working on the floor offer alternative positions.
- Encourage stability by ensuring feet are on the ground or well supported when sitting and table height is appropriate.

Exercises and activities which support development of postural control:

- Depending on the age of your child: Animal walks are fun and appealing ways to move between activities while engaging a range of muscle groups (Crab, duck, bear, kangaroo, frog, snake...)
- Weight bearing activities such as:
 - Wheelbarrow walks Push ups (knees / toes)
 - Chair push ups Wall push ups
- Whole body activities including:
 - Burpees Superman hold
 - Sit ups 
 - Plank Lunges
- Outdoor play options including:
 - Monkey bars Swings
 - Trampolines Balance beams
 - Indoor rock climbing
- Using tools and toys such as:
 - Hula hoops Scooter boards
 - Tug o war Skipping ropes
- Gym ball exercises - for example:



Seated leg lifts



Table top



Wheelbarrow



Arm and leg lifts, alternating