



OT Mom Learning Activities



Mat Exercises For The Classroom

These are good for small groups of +/- 6 children on the mat, before proceeding with maths or reading groups, or before returning to the desks for writing tasks. Also great for breaks in homeschool work time!

The Big Push: shoulder girdle and some core stability



Pair the children up and ask them to put their hands together, keeping elbows slightly bent.

Kids are to stand with one foot behind the other and on the count of 3, PUSH each other as hard as possible until one moves backwards.

Make sure the children keep their elbows bent, and arms held a little away from body.

Discourage children from holding their elbows tightly against their bodies because if they do that, they are not using their shoulder girdle muscles.

Midline Crossing Relay

Any object could be used for this simple relay, as long as each child passes and receives the object with both hands. Make sure that they are sitting either cross-legged, or on their knees to make sure their hips stay stable while their shoulders turn.



Midline Crossing Ball Pass



In this ball passing game, two kids sit back to back and pass the ball around to each other. You could do it 5 times in each direction as a warm up for other gross motor activities, or as a break from desk tasks





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Snake Curls (tummy curls): core stability

Ask the children to lie down on the floor, with legs together, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. If they struggle to keep their knees together, put a beanbag, scarf, or sock between their knees to encourage them to keep their knees together. Hands should be on thighs.

As the snake charmer (you!) plays a tune on the flute, the kids must raise their heads, and slide their hands up to their knees and hiss at you (holding the position) until you give the signal for them to go back down slowly. This is an adaptation of a tummy curl and works well if you get them to hold for a few seconds and repeat it a few times.



Bridge Game: core stability



You will need to demonstrate this to the children. For younger children, give them a toy car (or a block) to “drive” under the bridge from side to side.

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Lift your bottom off the floor to make a bridge. Drive the toy under your bottom to the other side. Ask the children to drive the cars through at the same time, and gradually increase the number of trips

the car takes before the bridge comes down!

You could also sing “London Bridge is falling down...”, letting the bridge be built up and fall down again.

Ball Walk: hand exercise (fine motor skills)

Any size of ball can be used – experiment to see what works well for your age group. Using the fingers of the hand, “walk” the ball up one leg, across the tummy and down the other leg. Make sure the children use their “dominant” hands and do not switch hands! Also, watch to make sure they use a “walking” motion with their fingers and not a grabbing motion!



Beanbag Toss: visual tracking and hand-eye coordination



Tossing a beanbag or ball into the air and catching again is a good hand-eye coordination exercise and also improves visual tracking skills, which are needed for reading. If a child tends to throw haphazardly, get him/her to stand in a hoop or mark a circle to stand in, to encourage more orderly throws.

Have Fun!

