

# KIDZ THERAPY SERVICES, PLLC

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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOME ACTIVITIES PRESCHOOL

Skill	Activity to promote this skill
<b>3 years:</b>	
Rides tricycle	Start by having the child propel self with his/her feet. Hands-on assistance may be required initially to achieve the actual pedaling action.
Walks up & down stairs using an alternating pattern	Verbal and visual cues to place only one foot on each step. Can use colored paper cutouts for visual cues for where to place feet.
Can stop suddenly when running	Playing follow the leader while stopping and starting suddenly.
<b>3 ½ Years:</b>	
Walks along line for 4-8 feet without stepping off.	Practice by walking along curbs or lines on tile floors.
Hops forward 6" on one foot.	Place toys or shapes on the floor; have child practice by jumping from one thing to the next
Catches a ball from 5 feet away with arms bent at elbows.	Practice playing catch with stuffed animals and larger balls
Stands on one foot for 5 seconds	Practice standing "like a ballerina" or bird
<b>4 Years:</b>	
Stands on tiptoes with hands overhead	Hold child's hands above their head and demonstrate standing on tiptoes; place a toy on a counter top and have them attempt to retrieve it
Gallops for 8-10 feet	Pretend to be a horse; demonstrate proper foot placements.
Jumps forward 36" with feet together	Use toys as distance markers; have the child try to jump to each toy
Tosses a ball forward underhand at least 10 feet.	Model how to throw underhand or use hand over hand assistance; start with shorter distances and gradually increase length of throw
<b>4 ½ Years:</b>	
Catches a tennis ball with both hands	Playing catch
Skips forward for 10 steps	Demonstrate skipping; verbal cues of "step and hop"
Stands on one foot and then the other for 10 seconds each	Stand on one foot then the other; make it into a contest

### **Ideas to improve stair negotiation:**

Practice walking up and down the stairs at home with verbal cuing on where the leg should be placed on each step. A good way to promote this skill is by playing "Simon Says" and having the child copy your pattern on the stairs. If they are having physical difficulty completing the skill, you can offer some assistance by helping to place their feet on each step, so they can get the feedback to their muscles of what the pattern should feel like.

### **Ideas to improve jumping skills:**

Provide assistance by holding the child's hands and helping them to jump further forward, down from a platform, or up in the air, decreasing your assistance with each trial. Once again, the muscles have a memory and this feedback helps them to remember what the skill should feel like. Continue to decrease your assistance until they are performing the activity independently and make it into a game of who can jump further or higher. Jumping on the trampoline can also be helpful due to the rebound effect, which also acts to assist/ enhance the skill.

### **Trunk Strengthening Activities:**

- Help the child to perform sit-ups on an inclined surface (such as a wedge), providing 2 finger assistance behind each shoulder to help them rise.
- Sitting on an unsteady object (such as a large ball) while playing with toys or coloring forces the child to use their core stabilizers (abdominal muscles) to keep themselves upright and balanced.
- Another activity that can be performed in a sitting position on the floor is catching and throwing a large ball above the child's head, while they are sitting tall with their legs in a diamond position. The trunk muscles work to keep the trunk steady when the child reaches to catch the ball. Increasing the speed and repetitions of throwing/ catching the ball further builds strength and endurance.
- The last activity can be performed with the child lying down on their back. Place a ball between the child's knees or ankles and ask them to squeeze it in place, while they raise and lower their legs up from the floor. This activity strengthens the abdominal, hip adductor (this muscle moves the legs together) and flexor (this muscle raises the leg up towards the body) muscles.

### **Additional suggestions:**

**Movement Games** – Games that incorporate gross movements are important and fun for children at this age. This will help the child to learn to move different body parts separate from the rest of his body. It will also help to develop strength and coordination. Examples of appropriate activities include follow the leader and dancing to music. Riding toys and jumping jacks are fun as well.

**Playground Activities** – Take advantage of nearby parks and playgrounds. These provide an open environment and equipment for running, climbing, jumping and swinging.

**Classes** – Classes and lessons in activities such as gymnastics, swimming, karate, and dance allow children to practice and develop their gross motor skills in a fun setting with their peers.

## ANIMAL WALKS TO IMPROVE LOCOMOTOR MOVEMENT

### **Hop like a bunny**

- Jump repeatedly with feet together
- Hands held up like bunny paws

### **Bird walk**

- Walk on tip-toes with hands held overhead

### **Waddle like a penguin**

- Arms at the sides with hands sticking out
- Walk on heels with toes up, taking short rapid steps

### **Spring like a kangaroo**

- Standing, bend knees to prepare to jump
- Jump with both feet together for distance
- Arms swing and then reach up overhead to help propel child forward

### **Bear walk**

- Walk forward with both hands and both feet on the floor

### **Flamingo**

- Encourage standing steadily on one foot with hands on hips
- Have a contest to see who can hold the position longest

### **Frog jump**

- Start in a full squatting position with the hands on the floor outside of the knees
- Jump forward and land in the same position

### **Gallop like a horse**

- One foot in front of the other with hands in front as if holding reins

### **Crab walk**

- Sit down with feet on floor and hands behind trunk
- Lift & keep bottom of the floor while moving forward feet first
- Try backwards, too!

### **Donkey kicks**

- Start standing and place hands solidly on the floor
- Kick both legs up high then land them on the ground

### **Be a caterpillar/inchworm**

- Walk on hands & feet
- When feet move, hands are still and vice versa
- Head up and eyes forward
- Bottom should move up and down

### **Skipping**

- Repeat the cues "Hop, step! Hop, step!" , arms and legs move opposite one another

### **Sand Play**

- Walking barefoot in the sand provides great tactile input to the feet and aides in developing stronger muscles in trunk, hips, and feet.