Jump Ahead-Gross Motor Skills and Sensory Circuits

Description:
Jump Ahead and Sensory Circuits help to develop children's gross motor skills. Gross motor (physical) skills are those which require whole body movement and which involve the large (core stabilising) muscles of the body to perform everyday functions, such as standing and walking, running and jumping, and sitting upright at the table. They also include eye-hand coordination skills such as ball skills (throwing, catching and kicking) as well as riding a bike or a scooter and swimming. Gross motor skills are important to enable children to perform every day functions, such as walking and running, playground skills (e.g. climbing) and sporting skills (e.g. catching, throwing and hitting a ball with a bat). Gross motor skills are also crucial for everyday self-care skills like dressing (where you need to be able to stand on one leg to put your leg into a trouser leg without falling over) and climbing into and out of a car or even getting into and out of bed. Gross motor skills affect your child's ability to cope with a full day of school (sitting upright at a table, moving around the classroom, carrying your heavy book bag). They also impact your child's ability to navigate their environment (e.g. walking around the classroom furniture, up a sloped hill or getting on and off a moving escalator when shopping).

Intended Outcomes:

- To improve your child's attention to task and alertness levels in readiness to respond quickly when they lose their balance and to respond to changes in the environment around them.
- To increase your child's core strength: Strengthen the 'core' (namely the large central muscles) of the body to provide greater body (especially trunk) stability.
- To gradually increase duration and intensity at which your child can sustain an activity.
- To improve sensory processing to ensure appropriate attention and arousal to attempt the tasks, as well as ensuring their body is receiving and interpreting the correct messages from the muscles in terms of their position, their relationship to each other, the speed at which they move and how much force they are using.
- To develop the underlying skills necessary to support whole body e.g:
  - balance and coordination
  - strength and endurance
  - attention and alertness (sensory processing)
  - body awareness
  - movement planning (praxis)

What can you do to help?
Play…

- **Hop Scotch** for hopping, or other games that encourage direct task/skill practice.
- **Simon Says** for body awareness and movement planning (praxis).
- **Wheelbarrow walking** races for upper body strength and postural or trunk control.
- **Unstable surfaces:** Walking/climbing over unstable surfaces (e.g. large pillows) as it requires a lot of effort and increases overall body strength.
- **Catching:** Begin catching with a large ball/balloon and only after the skill is mastered, move to a smaller sized ball.
- **Catching and balancing:** Standing with one foot on a ball while catching another ball (encourages balance while practicing catching and throwing).
- **Obstacle courses:** to combine lots of gross motor skills together into one practice.
- **Go to the park:** climbing and swinging.
- **Go swimming**