

Bilateral Coordination Activities

by Carrie Lippincott, OTR/L

1. Jump rope - This activity gives lots of input. There are many variations to jump rope games, such as jumping with the rope going forward, jumping with the rope going backward, leading with right foot and leading with left foot. Have the child keep track of his/her record. "How many jumps can you do before you snag your feet?"
2. Slide walking - Using reciprocal hand movements, have your child crawl up the front side of a slide, holding onto both sides of the slide with hands and pulling himself or herself up to the top.
3. Ring Toss - Have the child stand with feet in a fixed position. Throw rings, which he or she must try to catch with a dowel, which is held by both hands on one end. Rings are thrown to the child so he must shift or turn to the left, right, high, low, forward and backward, all the while not moving his feet.
4. Foot Hop/Jump Patterns - Have the child hop twice on the left foot, once on the right, until told to stop. Vary the directions by changing the number of hops on each foot. If this is difficult, start with jumping with both feet, then progressing to hopping on the right, then on the left, and alternating feet. Then move onto the patterns. Also, try kicking motions to the front, side, or back. You might even try putting in arm motions. Jumping to music is fun. Hopscotch is the old fashioned version of practicing hopping/jumping skills.
5. Riding a bicycle provides good reciprocal movements. Also, try bicycling with legs up in the air while lying on back.
6. Crawling - forward, backward, sideways or change direction on command. Crawling through an obstacle course is also fun. Also, add variety by doing animal walks:
 - Bearwalk* - The child bends from the waist/hips, keeping legs straight and touching hands to the floor, the child moves forward keeping the head up.
 - Birdwalk* - The child stands on tiptoes, flapping arms like wings.
 - Crabwalk* - From a squatting position, the child reaches backwards to place the hands on the floor behind the back. Trying to keep the trunk straight, try moving forward, backwards, and sideways.
 - Dog walk* - The child runs forward with both hands on the floor with knees slightly bent.
 - Duck walk* - The child squats down and walks forward in the squatted position.
7. Learning to juggle. Using scarves cut from filmy, light fabric is the easiest way to start. The scarves fall slower than balls. Start with one scarf, master that, move to two scarves, and graduate to three scarves.
8. Braiding, macramé.
9. Dusting furniture with a cloth in each hand.

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10. Swimming lessons. Swimming helps with overall body strengthening.
11. Accordion tubes or Rapper Snappers (plastic tubes you pull in and out). Adding a marble to roll down the tubes adds to the interest.
12. Tearing paper. For a project, cut out a brown rectangle to make a tree trunk and use green paper to tear and glue "leaves" to make a tree.

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