

HealthPoint

Rehabilitation Services • Health and Wellness

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SUMMER FUN

With this school year coming to a close, we look forward to some rest, relaxation and fun during this crazy time in our world. Summer is a great time to work on gross motor skills outdoors! The sunshine and warm temperatures make all of us eager to go outside and enjoy the fresh air. Below are some great outdoor toys, with clickable links, that can be used to work on your child's strength, balance, motor planning, endurance and coordination during their time off from school. Remember, whether it's structured or unstructured play, all movement matters so go out and enjoy the sunshine with your kids this summer break!

WATER & SAND TABLES

Activity tables are a great way to work on your child's lower extremity strength, especially those who are beginning to stand and walk. Have them work on standing without holding onto the side and cruising side to side while playing with their favorite toys. For those that are more advanced with their walking and standing skills, add an outdoor cushion or pool noodle under their feet to challenge their balance. Here are some examples from Amazon:



- ★ Water Table: <https://www.amazon.com/Watertable>
- ★ Sand Table: https://www.amazon.com/Crab_sand_table



T-BALL SET

A T-ball set is a great way to work on your child's visual motor coordination. Have them practice hitting large, softball sized balls from the tee and progress to a baseball sized ball. Once they have mastered hitting, work on their motor planning by having them incorporate running bases while you chase after them. Below is a link from Amazon for a basic T-ball set:

- ★ <https://www.amazon.com/T-ball-Set-Kids>

STOMP ROCKET

Challenge your child's balance with a toy that they can play with for hours. Have them count down from low numbers and as their balance improves have them try to count down from 10 to 0 before "blasting off" their rocket. Make sure your child practices stomping with both of their legs. You can also use the rocket to work on your child's jumping skills by having them attempt to jump on the air pump to launch the rocket. Below is a link to explore more stomp rockets:



★ <https://www.amazon.com/Stomp-Rocket>

GARDENING



This summer, make a small garden or flower bed with your child. Have your child dig up the dirt while in kneeling and squatting positions to work on their strength. In addition, they will be working on bilateral upper extremity coordination as they dig and plant seeds or flowers. If you do not want to deal with the maintenance that comes with gardens and flower beds you can find an area of dirt for your child to dig for worms! Below is an example of a gardening tool kit for kids:

★ <https://www.amazon.com/Gardening-Tool-Set>

SLIP N SLIDES

Slip N Slides are a child favorite! Have your child run as fast as they can to the slide before sitting on their bottom or sliding down on their belly. In addition, have them skip, gallop and even complete animal walks as they approach the slide. You can make your own slip n slide with items lying around the house including tarp, hose and pool noodles. For those that are not fans of slip n slides, try a splash pad where your child can work on their jumping and running skills. Below are links to view both the slip n slide and splash pad:



★ Slip N Slide: <https://www.amazon.com/Wham-Slip-Slide>

★ Splash Pad: <https://www.amazon.com/splashpad>

CHALK



There are so many ways to use chalk to help work on your child's strength, coordination and motor planning. Start off by creating different hopscotch patterns. Have your child work on both "feet together, feet apart" jumping and 1 to 2 foot hopscotch patterns. Try to challenge your child by having them complete multiple single leg hops in a row. In addition to hopscotch patterns, try drawing a sensory-motor path. Use your hopscotch pattern and incorporate lily pads for frog jumps, bear paw for bear walks, zig zag lines to tandem walk across like a balance beam and hypnotic circles for spinning like a top. If you feel stumped, check out youtube for some great sensory path ideas! Chalk can be found at a local store or here is a link to purchase it online:

★ https://www.amazon.com/sidewalk_chalk

WATER BALLOONS & SQUIRT GUNS

Water toys are great to use on hot summer days by providing some refreshing, cool water. Make some water balloons and practice catching and throwing with a partner. Practice throwing first at a stationary target. Once your child has mastered hitting a stationary object, try having a water balloon fight where they have to attempt to hit a moving target. If your child hates the noise of balloons popping, you can use splash balls as an alternative. In addition to water balloons, squirt guns are a great way to work on hand strength and visual motor coordination. Have your child practice squeezing the lever to release water. Once they have built up the hand strength to squirt the gun independently, draw colored circles or objects on the ground with chalk and see if they can try and hit the target to wash it away. Below are links for the water toys described above:



- ★ Water Balloons: <https://www.amazon.com/waterballoons>
- ★ Squirt Guns: <https://www.amazon.com/watershooter>
- ★ Splash Balls: https://www.amazon.com/Splash_balls

TRIKE



Work on your child's strength, balance and coordination by teaching them how to ride a trike this summer. Many children have difficulty with this skill. Start out small and break down riding a bike into its basic components and work your way back to piecing each skill together. First, work on pedalling. You may need to provide physical prompts at your child's feet and thighs while saying "push" so they understand what movement you are trying to make. Once they have mastered pedalling on their own, work on steering. Push your child around on the trike while your child works on steering around obstacles. Lastly, piece steering and pedalling together and take your kid on a bike ride.

Below is a link for trike off Amazon:

★ <https://www.amazon.com/Radio-Flyer-Trike>