

GROSS MOTOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT

FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY

SITTING

General information:

- ✚ Sitting requires more balance and control than lying. It also requires more strength of the muscles around your child's tummy, back and hips.
- ✚ The sitting position allows your child the opportunity to use their hands more; meaning they can explore their toys and surroundings more effectively.
- ✚ Once your child has started to sit, even for a short period of time, it is important to start practising a perched sitting position with their feet on the floor. This can be on the bottom step at home or even on an upturned toy box. In this position, your child will develop their trunk muscles and improve their balance further while putting weight through their feet, which is important for standing.

On the following pages are the stages to help your child learn to sit.

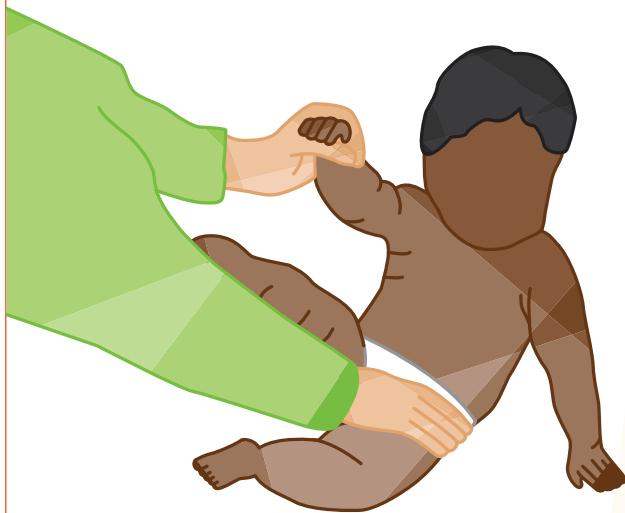


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Pulling to sit

Starting positions: More support

- 🚩 This starts when your child is small and, when they have less head control, they will need more support.
- 🚩 Start with your child lying on their back (this can be on a pillow initially).
- 🚩 Support your child's head and shoulders, only giving as much support as required.
- 🚩 Try to keep their head in the middle and encourage a chin tuck
- 🚩 Gently move their head and shoulders towards you to guide them into a sitting position.



Less support:

- 🚩 As your child develops more head control and strength, moving them in and out of sitting becomes less passive and means your child will start to join in with the movement.
- 🚩 When your child is lying on their back, hold onto their right hand.
- 🚩 Slowly and gently guide them up and over to their left side - placing a hand on their left hip will stop them from rolling over.
- 🚩 Your child will help with this movement using their left hand - initially your child may place their forearm down to support themselves and then progress to using their hand on an extended arm.
- 🚩 Remember to practise this to the other side as well.

Play ideas:

- 🚩 Singing/nursery rhymes.
- 🚩 Interacting or funny faces.

Supported sitting

Supported sitting can be completed in a variety of ways, with varying levels of support. It can be completed with your child facing you on your lap or sitting on the floor and playing with toys. A few examples are shown here but there are many more options to help develop sitting skills.



Starting position:

- ✚ Sit your child on a firm surface, like your lap or the floor - they can face away from you or towards you.
- ✚ Place your hands around their trunk.
- ✚ If this is too much of a challenge for your child, increase the support by allowing them to rest their back on you or by supporting them with cushions propped up behind them.
- ✚ As your child gets stronger, reduce the support by placing your hands on their hips.
- ✚ Encourage your child to prop on their hands either on the floor or on their thighs.
- ✚ Encourage bringing toys to their mouth or banging them together in mid line.

Play ideas:

- ✚ Toys placed just in front of them.
- ✚ Mirror.
- ✚ Reaching for your face.



Sitting Independently

Starting position:

- ✚ Sit your child on a firm surface like the floor - you can place cushions around the floor next to them in case they topple over.
- ✚ Your child will prop on their hands initially to help them stay upright.
- ✚ Your child may have a rounded back initially, with legs slightly bent.
- ✚ Encourage them to sit tall by getting them to reach for toys slightly away from them, to either side and in front.

Play ideas:

- ✚ Songs or nursery rhymes- row your boat is a good option.
- ✚ Mirrors.
- ✚ Cause and effect toys with buttons that are easy to push- piano style toys or a soft ball.

Perch sitting

Perch sitting (sometimes known as box sitting) is when a child sits on a surface with their feet flat on the floor. This position can be achieved by sitting your child on your lap in the early stages, and then progressing to sitting on a small chair or step. It is an important stage for your child to learn as this helps them to develop the skills for standing.



Starting position:

- Start by sitting your child on a small bench, step or chair with their feet flat on the floor - their hips and knees should be at 90° angles.
- Ensure someone is behind your child in case they lose their balance.
- Sit your child in front of a table or the sofa so they can play in this position.
- Encourage them to have a straight back and reach in different directions while sitting in this position, as well as turning to look over their shoulders.

Play ideas:

- Shape sorter toys.
- Books.
- Bubbles.

Side Sitting

Side sitting is important for your child to learn as it helps develop control of turning the body which is required for crawling and walking. It is also a position that is adopted during transitions of bigger movements like pulling up to furniture and standing.

Starting position:

- When your child is sitting on the floor, gently turn one leg so that both knees are facing in the same direction.
- You can encourage your child to “prop” or weight bear through their arm (it should be on the same side as their knees are facing).
- Try to encourage your child to play in this position for as long as they will tolerate.
- When your child is able to support their own body weight, start to encourage them to reach further out for toys in different directions, including above their head and further away from their body.
- Remember to practise this on both sides.
- As your child becomes more confident, they can progress to both hands being on the floor in readiness for developing strength for crawling.

Play ideas:

- Rolling a ball.
- Cars or trucks etc.

