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Core Strengthening for Preschool Children

What is our core?

Our core/trunk includes the muscles of our stomach (abs), and back. Our core also affects the strength in our shoulders and our hips and pelvis.

Why are these muscles so important for preschool children?

A strong core is necessary for the arms and legs to have a solid foundation as a base of support. Fine motor movements of the arms and hands (coloring, cutting, writing, etc.) as well as gross motor movements of the legs and feet (kicking a ball, standing on one foot, etc.) need a stable core! If a child has a strong core then they can move with precision and control.

Kids also need good trunk control in order to sit upright in a chair at school. If their muscles tire easily then they are more apt to slouch, or get up from their chair. Tired muscles in the trunk make for an unstable frame for hands and feet to do their best work.

The core is the center of strength for everything else the body does!

What activities can my child do to develop a strong core?

1. Tummy Time...on elbows!

Child lays on their belly while **propped up** on their elbows, not holding their head in their hands. They use one hand to play a game or just hold this position while watching their favorite show! No cheating!

2. Hands and Knees!

- Throw bean bags or rolled up socks into a bucket or a laundry basket.
- Play a puzzle or any game while holding hands and knees.
- Watch your favorite show while in tummy time on elbows then hold hands and knees during the commercials! Can you make it?!

3. Superman!

Child lays on their belly and holds their arms and legs off the floor for as long as they can...like superman! Talk about what they see while they are flying through the air (grandma's house, etc.)!

4. Animal Walks!

- Crab walks- sit down on the floor and use only your hands and feet to move yourself. Make an obstacle course with objects or toys in the room.
- Bear walk- start on hands and knees and lift yourself onto just your hands and feet and walk like a bear! Growl and grab pretend food along your path.
- Dog/Cat (crawling)- pretend to be a cat or a dog by crawling through the house! Make sure the child is using reciprocal (back and forth) movements of his arms and legs- no hopping like a frog! That's a different game!

5. Sit on a ball!

Use a ball instead of a chair to sit on. It provides an unstable surface and makes your child's trunk work hard while sitting at a small table to do Legos or Play-Doh, etc.