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To form good postural habits, childrens' growing bodies require activities in which they can maintain good body support in movement.

There are two phases of early locomotion that are especially adapted to developing the deep supporting muscles of the body and good coordinated habits of movement. These are the rolling and crawling actions in which the heavy part of the body is supported in the horizontal plane, in contrast to the vertical plane of support used in the upright position.

The pre-school child(2-5 years) tends to be on his feet a great deal in comparison with his endurance level. Too much of the time the child's body is straining to support itself on a different plane to which it has not built up sufficient strength and endurance. Although he has some muscle development, the child has not sufficient muscle endurance to maintain as good balance and as good coordinated habits in the upright positions of sitting and standing as in those giving better body support.

Parents and teachers can do much to help childrens' posture by increasing proper stimuli in connection with the rolling and crawling actions.

Because the average adult has not appreciated the possibilities that these actions have in the child's body development, the stimuli that surround the child in the home and school have tended to lead away from them.

Nursery, kindergarten and primary school programs should include a more scientific use of these activities. Rolling and crawling movements should be slow, rhythmical, and fluidic. This will allow the most complete action throughout the muscle structure since too tense muscles will be relaxed and weaker ones stimulated to action. Children can be encouraged to roll and crawl properly, through play, motivated by stories and observation, of nature, and of animal actions and habits. By helping the children establish a background of enjoyable sensory experience associated with these actions, the child's interest in rolling and crawling can be aroused and his movement guided in them.

The accompanying plays are adapted for use with, or without, a piano since the verse accompanying each play may be sung or chanted, to aid in slowing the tempo and keeping the rhythm. The music given has been chosen both for its simplicity of execution and for its rhythmical appeal to the child. It can be used to slow the tempo of the child's action, or to achieve a more collective movement of the group.

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Rolling Movement

It will be seen that the children will roll in various ways. The ones who have been allowed to roll freely during and since babyhood will enjoy, and be the most skillful, in the coordination of the legs, arms and head, as the body slowly turns itself. Those less proficient will show more or less dislike of the floor and less enjoyment in their coordinations. These children should learn to roll by practice and unconscious imitation of other children rather than by direction.

* Five or six revolutions in each direction is the best amount to do at one time.

Note (1): A smaller object such as a rolling pin may be used. Choose something with which the child has not built up the association of tenseness. A ball, for instance, is not good because a child's associations with a ball are of speed and rapid motion.

CRAWLING MOVEMENT.

The crawling aim is to stimulate spinal muscle action.

In this action as described by some educators the abdomen touches the floor. Squirming or wriggling over the floor a few inches helps to develop the spinal muscles. It can be performed by the baby soon after birth when he is placed on a firm surface. He wiggles and squirms ever so slightly ~~along~~ one side of his axis ^{then} ~~and~~ the other as does a worm.

CREEPING MOVEMENT.

One creeping aim is to develop co-ordination.

The creeping action develops a sense of movement from the center of the body. The alternate use of an opposite thigh and shoulder carries an interplay of movement back and forth through the body ~~that~~ instills good co-ordinated habits for life. The child loves to creep and in doing so brings naturally under his control many more muscles than what can be done in any other position while he is a child.

However in re-education unless a child is able to enjoy creeping well he tends to go forward too rapidly to gain normal use of the muscles. Creeping backward will help to correct this by relaxing his arms and lower legs and letting him use his thigh and shoulder muscles. In the movement backward the heavier, pelvic end of the body leads. This centers the weight in the pelvis and stimulates into action the important spinal and crouch muscles. As this pattern of creeping backward becomes familiar it is possible for him to control enough weight in the pelvic end as he changes to creeping forward.

Imagery;

1. Straddling a crack on the floor.

Crawl backward relating the crack to one's center line (axis).

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Crawl backward relating the crack to one's center line (axis).

2. A large pillow placed on the floor against a wall serves as a goal, as in a base-ball game, toward which to back up.

Directed crawling backward needs motivation to help keep a child's interest. When it cannot be provided end the exercise with a short interval of free (undirected) crawling backward. This lets the subconscious come to the fore and relaxes undue tension in the muscles. This of itself seems fun to the child and enjoyment to the adult.

3.

BREATHING MOVEMENT.

The first breathing aim is to lengthen exhalation.

Children that are less well coordinated are not able to exhale easily. Their exhalation is limited by the pattern of a shorter, more rigid spine than that of the average child. These children can be helped to exhale through acquiring a muscle pattern that lengthens the muscles down in back of the spinal axis. Exhalation and lengthening the muscles down back of the axis work together ; as you do one you are doing both. When you exhale you are lengthening down back of your spinal axis, and when you are lengthening down back of the axis you are exhaling. This action produces suppleness and elasticity in the muscles along the sides and back of the axis such as one feels along the cat's back.

Images to use:

1. The axial (tail) image that the child senses when he strokes a cat from its head toward its tail can become a symbol or image to him of what this area should be like in his own body. Teaching will consist in helping him to apply this image in all positions, those of sitting and standing are a good place to begin. He should be reminded of it frequently, every day if possible so that he forms the habit of lengthening his spine downward as he releases his breath (exhales) and starts and standing are a good place to begin. He should be reminded of it frequently, every day if possible so that he forms the habit of lengthening his spine downward as he releases his breath (exhales) and starts to move.
2. A tape measure to mark the distance is an incentive. Show one to the child and let him see how far 10 inches is on it. Then place it over the middle of his upper back, and use the pressure of your finger to indicate the distance he will try to go in exhaling. As 10 inches become possible for him go to 15 inches etc. The well known locations on the body also serve well as goals, such as the waistline - back of knees - back of heels.
3. Blowing a whistle - horn - or musical instrument is very good for lengthening the exhalation phase of the breath.
(See back of this manual pp.19-21 for further suggestions and directions on exhalation).

Suggested Play

Rolling a barrel

MUSIC Mrs. Schutz uses Dalergo choirs in broken thirds.

Background of Sensory Experience

As the music is played very very slowly and evenly, an adult, or one of the children accustomed to keeping time to music, rolls a keg or small barrel very slowly over the floor. Then, if possible, each child in the group should be given the opportunity to roll the object.

Keep the child's attention centered on the very slow movement of the keg to the music. In this way the child's nervous tension will become somewhat relaxed, and he will be prepared to imitate the visual and sensory experience he has been observing.

The teacher or mother suggests that the children, singly or in a group, dramatize the sensory experience by becoming rolling kegs or barrels themselves.

Play Action

The child, or children, lie down on the floor or ground. Progression is made to the right or left over the floor by slowly turning the body from the back, to the side, to the front, to the other side of the body and so on, over and over.

When a group of children are rolling at the same time, see that the children are spaced over the floor so that each has plenty of room. This can be done in a small space by having them all roll one way at the same time. Then time the rolling the reverse way so that they will all be rolling in that direction at the same time.

It will be seen that the children roll in various ways. The ones who have been allowed to roll freely during and since babyhood will enjoy and be the most skillful, in the coordination of the legs, arms and head, as the body slowly turns itself. Those less proficient will show more or less dislike of the floor and less enjoyment in their coordination. These children should learn to roll by practice and unconscious imitation of other children rather than by direction. 5 to 6 revolutions in each direction best. will show more or less dislike of the floor and less enjoyment in their coordination. These children should learn to roll by practice and unconscious imitation of other children rather than by direction. 5 to 6 revolutions in each direction best.

Note(1) A smaller object such as a rolling pin may be used. Choose something with which the child has not built up the association of tenseness. A ball, for instance, is NOT good because a child's associations with a ball are of speed and rapid motion.

Suggested Play

Humpty Dumpty

MUSIC

Verse "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;
Humpty Dumpty did not cry
He said, "I can sit up again if I ~~try~~."

Background of Sensory Experience

Humpty Dumpty can be represented by drawing a face and body (or simply a face) on an egg or darning yall. Since we are interested in this exercise in centering the child's attention in the muscles of the back and pelvis it is better not to represent the legs or arms. The representation of Humpty Dumpty by a small sack of meal or sawdust would convey the best visual and tactile sense of the body action. If desired the corners of the sock could be rounded and the whole sock painted or dyed. As the group sings the song, each child should be allowed to be the director, in turn, of the "puppet" actions which would consist in allowing the puppet to slowly fall, and sitting it up AS THE GROUP SINGS THE SONG, EACH CHILD SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO BE the director, in turn, of the "puppet" actions which would consist in allowing the puppet to slowly fall, and sitting it up again.

Play Action

1. The children sit on the wall all facing the same way (the wall can be represented by a crack or board in the floor, a line in the rug pattern, a chalk line, or a suggested imaginary line.
2. The song is commenced, and as the action is expressed in

3. The children remain on their backs for the third line of the verse. (This may be hastened a little for greatest interest).
4. The children roll up to the sitting position from which they started, as did the puppet.

Three or four repetitions of the play are sufficient for one period.

Directions in detail.

The children will sit in various ways, some with legs straight out, some with one or both legs crossed, and some with the knees flexed. The latter is the more suggestive of the puppet body and should be taken by the adult, (see directions for adult). Some of the older children will unconsciously imitate the position of the adult. Some encouragement can be given in this but no insistence should be made upon it with the smaller ones. To slowly lie down from a sitting position and then slowly come up again to the sitting position without the aid of the arms requires considerable development of the spinal and deep abdominal muscles. The action in this play will strengthen these and give stronger, more flexible backs, and straighter abdominal lines.

* The children will be obliged at first to touch their hands and
action in this play will strengthen these and give stronger, more
* flexible backs, and straighter abdominal lines.

The children will be obliged at first to touch their hands and elbows to the floor to keep from bumping their heads on the floor as they go down. And again they will have to employ the same method to raise themselves off the floor back to the sitting position. This of itself shows the weakness in the spinal and deep abdominal muscles of the average small child, and in how much need they are of play that brings about this action.

Suggested Play

Play Eyes

MUSIC

Verse

Background of Sensory Experience

Place a small mask on a child with the face of the mask on the back of the head. The other in the group will observe how "pretend eyes" can be represented in this way on the back of the head. Each child in the group should be allowed to try the mask on in this way that they may accustom themselves to the idea of play eyes in the back of the head. If there is only one child playing let him look in a mirror to see how he looks with pretend eyes on the back of his head. The mother or nurse should put on the mask to show how they look. The adult may suggest that the child or children play walking and using the "pretend eyes" to tell where to go.

where to go.

1. Clear a space eight to twelve feet long and place one or two small chairs at the end of it. (One chair if only one to three children, two chairs if four to ten children are playing) The space should be wide enough to allow each child four feet of clear space so that there will be no apprehension of hitting anything, and no distraction from another child.
2. The child, or two children, chosen to be first, put on the mask as above and stand at the opposite end of the space from that where the chair is placed.

3. The child stands directly in line with the front of his assigned chair (this should be gauged with the eye and not by a fixed line) with his back toward the chair.
4. As the child stands with his back to the chair the adult should make sure that he has turned his head and exactly located the position of the chair.
5. The child walks backward (backs up) toward his chair, and sits down in it, through the remembered sense of direction, and without turning his head to see where he is going.

Some children will not be able to do this at first without looking. As they gain confidence in walking backward they will take pleasure in being able to walk so as to arrive in front of their chair without looking. The children, observing, derive much fun from seeing whether the children walking backward will go to one side of the middle of the chair, or whether they can go as straight to the chair as if they were looking at it.

Coleman J. Thorn

The children's song

Lotic
by ~~Lotic~~ Coleman adapts

easily to encouraging good habits of relaxation on the part of children.

Because of the differences ^{between the human and the animal} in structure it is not desirable to dramatize the exact positions the animals take; but there is enough similarity, so that we can use the child's dramatic instinct, as an incentive, for him to assume the correct positions we would like him to take.

There are more animals that rest in the side position, like a human, than in either of the other two positions.

In the face down position the seal, alligator, and fish are the nearest to the human position and these can be used with older children. For younger children who will not be keen on comparisons, the cat, dog, bunny, frog, mouse, etc., will bring a greater appeal. *Looking small*

For the lying on the back position the writer has ~~has~~ used pictures of bear and leopard cubs, who frequently take the back position. ^{in play.} These will be especially good for older children. For the younger children the cat and dog will be equally good since they sometimes take these positions, too. *in play.*

For the side position any of the domestic animals may be dramatized as the cow, ~~horse~~, sheep, pig, cat, dog.

~~For the squatting position the domestic fowls and birds offer as the cow, ~~horse~~, sheep, pig, cat, dog.~~

~~For the squatting position the domestic fowls and birds offer examples, as the duck, hen, robin, etc.~~

The Chicken.

Be a little chicken
All fluffed up for sleep
Head tucked down and
Feet tucked up, then
Wake up and peep.

Be little chicken
Hopping on a griddle
How far can she hop;
That's just the riddle.

A Dog.

Bend your nice long legs
~~Like a dog that begs~~
And sit on them
Be a dog with a flea
Rub it off on a tree.
Then walk one two three.

The Butterfly.

The Butterfly.

Be a fuzzy caterpillar, all nice and soft,
Unfold your legs and wings and fly aloft.

For now you're a butterfly handsome and gay,
What more could you wish for all in one day?

Be an elephant gray
And let both your arms sway
Like his trunk.

Cradle.

Be a cradle made of willow,
With your chest soft like the pillow,
And cuddle down in it.

Alligator

Be an Alligator
A girl on the hot equator
Watched a blinking alligator
She wore a big ring on her chin.
But he had room for her within.

Bedoin

Be a bedoin for fun,
Singing Allah in the sun
Ten times one.

Be a lobster good to eat,
Tail curled up between your feet,
As you stand.

Rear up on haunches 3 ways
Round about flutter

A DOG STRETCH

He stretches his two paws
To the tips of the claws
First a forepaw very slowly

While he yawns

Chorus

Keep the waist up

There's a good pup

Then the hind legs to a point
Stretch the muscles of the joint
While he feels all soft and roly

And he yawns

Then the two feet left and right
Never getting stiff or tight
For he still is very sleepy.

And he yawns

Next he stretches out full length
Just to try and test his strength
And he wakes up very slowly.

And still yawns

Now he arches his back up
Like a strong and wiry pup.

And still yawns

Now he arches his back up
Like a strong and wiry pup
And he sits back Oh so slowly

As he yawns

Children's Posture

① Creeping Exercise

Turtle, turtle on your way, why are you so slow?
No one else in all this world takes so long to go.

To the foot of yonder tree, run a race with me,
Who is then the better man, we will surely see.

2 Rocking Exercise

Head to toes and toes to head
That's the way to goss.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Rocking to and fro.

3 Standing-Forward Stride-See-saw backward & forward- Then slide forward- Rpt-See-saw-Slide Backward

Lightly row, lightly row
O'er the sparkling waves we go
Smoothly glide, smoothly glide
O'er the deep, blue tide.
Let the winds and waters be
Mingled in our melody.
Smoothly glide, smoothly glide
O'er the silent tide.

See-saw-like backward courtesy -Be-
gin to sit down while standing up

Slide, gliding with as little body
movement as possible

4 Bouncing on Ball to tune of London Bridge-Sing for breathing

Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb

5 Walking tight rope for straight foot walking and balance

Rope on floor

6 Sit on heels and swing arms up and down while hissing or singing
as long a time as possible on one breath.

7 Creep with traces

8 Creep balancing pins

9 Walk with bean bag on head- Imagine if it sank to ground it
would go thru middle of body.

10 Balance ball on head- See what you can do with it there.

11 Pick up marbles with feet

Table Work

12 -
Plant a tree, the thigh vertical- Roots go down into table-Pack earth down-
Place hands on knees (the baby)-

Rock-a-bye baby on the tree top
When the wind blows the cradle will rock.
If the bough breaks the cradle will fall
And down will come baby cradle and all.

Rock knees alternately up and
down keeping roots firm in

table

Let hands & knees fall but

8 creep balancing pins

9 Walk with bean bag on head- Imagine if it sank to ground it

Table Work

Kiss knee

Dig holes in sand with toes- Let water run under the bridge

Raising leg from table -One is left-two right.

One comes up-two comes up

One goes down ~~I say~~ *to stay*

Two comes up with all its heart

But two I cast away.

One comes ~~up~~ *up*, two comes up

But both ~~go down~~ *are up* together.

Both I carry and both they tarry

And that's the end to ³/₄ day.