

LECKEY



Targeted Play Ideas for Parents

Supporting Children

What is Targeted Training & how does it work?

Targeted Training helps your child to learn control of their upright posture; this helps them to gain functional skills. The Squiggles TT will be set up by your therapist to provide trunk support directly beneath the segment where control becomes difficult for your child. This support is gradually lowered as control is gained. Targeted Training uses the neutral vertical posture. This means that your child should be fully upright in the Squiggles TT with the trunk not excessively extended (tummy pushed forwards) or flexed forwards or to the side.

Building Control

There are three different types of control that contribute to your child gaining more postural control:

Static Control

Which works on maintaining a steady neutral vertical posture for 5 seconds. This is most easily achieved if your child is engaged and entertained.



Active Control

Movement is introduced at this stage, which works on holding the neutral vertical posture while turning the head or reaching.



Reactive Control

This is simply a case of doing the active exercises using the dynamic base and aims for your child to hold, or quickly regain, the neutral vertical posture when balance is challenged. The rocking can result from your child's own movement or a gentle nudge from you.



The dynamic base should not be used when learning head control so as to avoid any excessive movement around the neck area that your child may struggle to control.

How long and how often should the Squiggles TT be used?

Your therapist will advise you on how long and how often your child should ideally use the Squiggles TT.

Around 30 minutes of Targeted Play are needed each day for your child to start gaining the benefits. This can be built up from 5-10 minute sessions initially. The 30 minute sessions can also be split into two 15 minute sessions if preferable.

If your child tires and cannot maintain a truly upright (neutral vertical) posture the session should stop. If your child remains happy and engaged during therapy, sessions can be built up to 45 minutes.

The Squiggles TT can be used as part of a postural management programme for up to 1 hour at a time and Targeted Play can be carried out as part of these sessions. Squiggles TT holds your child more securely than regular standers and should therefore not be used for more than 1 hour at a time, so as to ensure comfort.

To optimise results, Targeted Training should be done 4-6 days a week.

Targeted Play!

We have put together some suggestions for targeted play activities at home. Your therapist can give you guidance on which activities would be best suited to your child's current skill set.

These activities depend on which trunk segment is targeted and whether your child is currently working towards static, active or reactive control.

If your child is working on head or upper thoracic control, then a tray may be fitted - this is to support the weight of your child's arms so that they can achieve upright control more easily. If your child is working on any lower trunk control then hands and arms must be free.



If your child holds onto a toy that you are also holding, they are using this for extra support. When your child reaches and grasps a toy, you let go to encourage them to build on their upright control.



Activity ideas for Head Control (with head support and a tray in place)

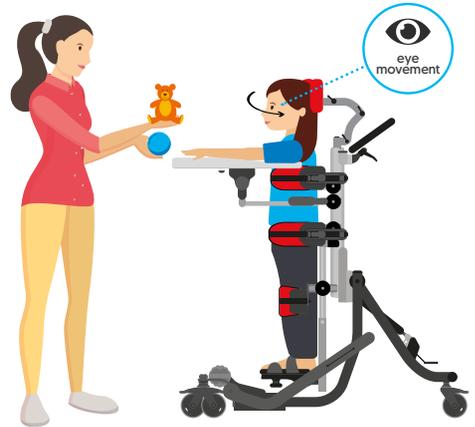
Tell a story or sing a song

Ideally your child's head will be upright during this activity. To encourage keeping this position, try to only tell the story or sing the song when your child's head is upright.



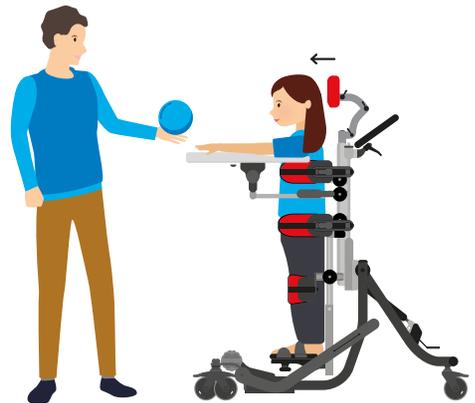
Decision making

This activity doesn't sound super fun but if you bring your child's favourite snacks or toys into it, this can work well. Hold an option to the left and to the right of your child: wait until they are in an upright position and ask them to choose which option they want by looking at it. Keep these movements small to start and increase over time.



Building Control

When a therapist advises that your child can manage a little time with their head away from the headrest, you will move the headrest backwards to allow for a small gap behind your child's head. Carry on with the same activities and see if your child is holding their head upright and not using the headrest – it will still be there for safety.



These activities can still be used when the head support has been removed to encourage movement, decision making and activity.



Activity ideas for Upper Thoracic Control with a tray (no head support)

We want to encourage arm movements while your child keeps their head steady, then arm movements and moving their head as well. The tray is in place to provide a little extra help.

Stop/Start Games

Set a ball on the tray and get your child to put both hands on the ball. Their hands should be about level with their face for this activity. Help your child to “freeze” the ball and hold it steady, then “unfreeze” the ball and move it around the tray. The ball gives your child a slightly unstable surface to work with and build control. Encourage your child to turn their head and watch the ball.



Sweep and Push

Encourage your little one to sweep a ball or balloon across the tray: gradually over time encourage a push rather than a sweep as this requires more control! Again, encourage head turn when your child becomes an expert ‘sweeper’.



Music Time

Improvise some drumsticks and get your child to make some music on their tray! The goal of this activity is to get your child to lift their arms on their own and keep them off the tray for at least a few seconds. Move the ‘drums’ further to the sides of the tray to encourage some side to side movement of the arms with head turn!



Activity ideas to build on Thoracic Control

Reach Out

Get your little one to stretch both arms out, away from any support and reach towards their favourite toy. Let them reach for a few seconds, holding their posture and then let them take the toy.



Shadow Games

If your child likes lights, you could grab their attention and beam a light against a wall to make shadow puppets. Encourage your child to join you making shapes with their hands/arms raised away from any support.



Bubble Time

Blow some bubbles in front of your child. The aim of this activity is to encourage your child to pop any of the bubbles, with both hands, when they see them. Increase fun and excitement with a 'here they come', varying direction of the side you blow the bubbles from so that your child is moving in all directions.



To work on reactive control the dynamic base can be used for any of these activities.

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