

The Ball Programme

1. Freshen Up
2. Walk the ball
3. Ball Sandwich
4. Bounce to the tune
5. Roll the Dough



Each of these exercises has a slightly different emphasis but overall the aims are to help regulate the children and facilitate a calm/alert state, which is the optimal state for concentrating and engaging in classroom and home activity. The ball programme also helps develop balance, co-ordination, timing, active listening, social co-operation and enhanced fine and gross motor skills.

1. Freshen Up

Instructions – ask the child to have a pretend shower by getting them to rub their faces and ‘wash’ down their arms and legs. Then ask them to ‘dry’ themselves by shaking out their arms and legs. Then change to jumping up and down on the spot 5 times.

This is a warm up exercise which aims to waken their bodies up for action and increase body awareness, providing greater awareness of where their body is in space.

2. Walk the ball

Instructions – ask the child to lie on their tummy on the ball, place hands on the floor and slowly walk forwards on their hands as far as possible without straining or falling off. The child should keep their back and elbows straight. If this activity is too difficult for the child to perform without dipping in the middle of the back ask them to slowly rock over the ball starting from hugging the ball on their knees and slowly rocking forwards over the ball onto their hands.

This activity provides joint compression and activates the muscles. It will also facilitate the use of wrist extension to support handwriting and help with proprioception and body awareness, shoulder and core stability and motor planning. Because it involves use the larger muscles of the body it also has a regulatory component to it.

3. Ball sandwich

Instructions – ask the child to place the ball against a wall at lower back height and lean in against it.

The deep pressure touch over a large body surface has a calming effect

4. Bounce to the tune

Instructions – the child sits on the gym ball and bounce up and down in time to the music

This activity demands balance, co-ordination, timing, active listening and social co-operation

5. Roll the dough

Instructions – ask the child to lie on their tummy and let them know that you are going to roll the ball over their body. Ask them if they want you to press hard or soft. When they have responded, roll the ball up their body from their ankles to their shoulders. Doing it slowly is very calming,

This activity provides deep touch pressure which is calming and regulating. It also provides the child with greater feedback about where their body is in space and may support interaction and communication.