

Ashgate Specialist Support Primary School

My body and how it moves

**A programme of learning for physical development for pupils with profound and complex learning difficulties.
(previously assessed as working from P1- P4)**

Pupils who have physical difficulties or who are still mastering early physical skills need lots of opportunities to move around, both supported and freely. They may also require a range of equipment for lying, sitting, standing, walking.

Some children may be having active treatment from a physiotherapist and/ or an occupational therapist and may also have an ongoing treatment programme. School staff should consult therapists when writing physical targets for a child's education programme and ideally any physical objectives should be jointly agreed between all the professionals who work with each pupil and the child's family.

Pupils who have significant mobility difficulties will require a moving and handling plan. This plan will be written by the Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist and shared with the class team. The therapy team should also share this document with the child's family and provide advice regarding moving and positioning at home.

The physical skills programme should be the focus of a lesson each day. This may be as part of a class PE lesson, as part of a cross grouped physical activity or as a functional part of another activity – for example walking around outside during leisure time.

The programme of learning is divided into four main areas:

1. Body Awareness

2. Fine Motor Movement



3. Gross Motor Movement

4. Mobility

Body Awareness

Progress within body awareness should begin with children experiencing a range of different things e.g. Different movements and sensations such as swinging, floating, rolling, massage and feeling different textures. It is hoped that passive 'allowing' will become more active 'enjoying'.

The ultimate aim is that they will be able to move their bodies voluntarily and with control. Remember that in this programme, the emphasis is on the physical movement, not on the understanding of the use of that movement.

As part of the physical programme, children should have a range of different positions in which they can comfortably work. Consult with the physiotherapists on the positions suitable for individual children and the length of time they should be in that position.

In the programme the phrase 'show awareness of...' requires a record of what the pupil actually does to indicate they are aware that something is happening to them as this will vary from pupil to pupil. Some might move their eyes, some their limbs, others might stiffen or become more relaxed. Please make a record of what each child does to show that they are aware of being moved.

Pupils should have opportunities to:

- Show awareness of massage of hands/ feet/ arms/ legs (maybe with aromatherapy oils), and various sensory stimulation on different parts of the body (e.g. foot spa, silk material, fan)
- Show awareness of a range of total body movements (e.g. swinging, floating, rolling)
- Show awareness of a range of different body orientations (e.g. flat, bunched up, upside down)
- Show awareness of where their body is in space (e.g. on top, under, crawl through)
- Show awareness of how different parts of their body link together
- Show awareness of a range of pace of movement (e.g. slow, quick, jerky, smooth)
- Show awareness of different textures touching body (e.g. cold, soft, rough)
- Show awareness of their limbs to be moved passively (e.g. stretching in exercises or as part of action songs)
- Show awareness of objects in designated spaces to touch different parts of the body when moving even if only slightly (e.g. when

using a 'Little Room' the child may move and then still in response to the feedback they receive from objects in their environment) *

- Move their hands and arms with hand-under-hand support/ hand-over-hand support and/or co-actively.
- Engage with body awareness songs and games (e.g. Heads, Shoulders Knees and Toes or Round and Round the Garden)
- Actively move as part of body awareness activities.

*Lilli Nielson – Active Learning and Little Rooms

Dr. Lilli Nielsen's work championed the importance of active learning for young people with severe and profound learning difficulties. Key principles of her approach include:

- **Everyone Can Learn**
- **Active Learning is Hands Off**

Children with profound learning needs are dependant on adults for their care and can be passive participants in the many routines around their physical and medical needs. Active Learning involves creating supportive and responsive environments that are tuned to encourage a learner to become more active.

- **Auditory and Tactile Primacy**

Many learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties have visual impairments as part of their profile of need and find it difficult to process visual information. Objects chosen for the Little Room need to provide auditory or tactile feedback to the learner as well as visual stimulation.

- **Responsive Environment, Short Sessions**

The environment should provide high quality auditory and tactile feedback (not just stimulation). Use of the Resonance Board can provide key vibratory input. The Little Room provides a warm, inviting echo and exploration chamber. Many short sessions are better than one long one, especially when first using an environment.

- **Mix Variety and Constancy, Provide Comparisons**

Learners benefit from moderated variety. Enough variation should be provided to maintain interest but the whole learning environment should not be constantly changed. Providing “alike but different” objects invites comparison. Cycling through a large inventory of objects/toys allows for a rich, constantly interesting environment. Some of the objects should be changed whenever the learner shows habituation to the objects available.

- **Emotional Development Involves Mastery**

It is important that children learn that they can do something to their environment to cause an effect and learn to enjoy the fact that they can influence their environment.

- **Learning is by Repetition – Allow to Fail**

Children learn by repetition. They must do something over and over to invoke memory and get the variations to make sense. Therefore, allowing them to have negative results without intervention (e.g. without moving an object into their hand as they miss on a reach) is important.

- **Talk and Reward at the End of Play**

Adult input should be left until the end of the active play session. Staff should use language to describe what the learner has done, and to positively reinforce their activity. This may involve pointing at and jiggling the objects and talking about what they did. When a learner is ready and can engage in turn-taking games, then a new level of learning has been achieved.

- **Limit Input, Wait for Response**

As a general principle, learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties usually need more time to take in, process and assemble a response. It is vital that they are given time to initiate and repeat a movement. Session times will need to be gauged to the needs of the individual learner allowing them the time they need to begin to actively explore the space available.

Dr. Lilli Nielsen's Little Room is a core active learning environment, providing a resonant, warm, rich and safe place for children to engage in. When filled with acoustically responsive toys, it naturally feeds back to the child for every movement. Panels are all two-sided, positive-lock and easy to rearrange, providing a fluid, long term interesting environment. The little room can be used on top of a Resonance Board for maximum feedback as long as the pupil can be positioned safely on the board.

Bespoke small space learning environments can also be made for individual students from large cardboard boxes and filled with objects that are motivating for them.

Additional information can be found on the Lilliworks website (www.lilliworks.com)

Activity Frames and problem solving baskets

Activity frames and problem solving baskets with carefully chosen toys and increasing levels of complexity can also be used to encourage children to reach out and explore independently during play and can be varied according to individual need.



Fine Motor Movement

This part of the programme can be divided into 4 areas:

Reaching	Grasping	Releasing	Manipulating
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Reaching

Children should have opportunities to:

- Bring their hands into midline (this might be easier initially when children are lying on their sides where gravity can help to bring the top hand down to meet the lower hand)
- Have objects of various kinds placed in their hands
- Touch objects of various kinds with their hands
- Touch objects in midline/ on left/ on right / cross midline
- Touch objects with one hand/ with two hands
- Bend and straighten their arms
- Reach for objects just out of reach – midline/ right/left – one hand/ both hands
- Reach for objects and bring them close (not necessarily grasping them) – one hand/ both hands/ midline/ left/ right /cross midline
- Reach for objects and grasp them (whole hand)
- Reach for objects and grasp them (pincer grasp)
- Reach / aim with feet to hit target / obtain object

Grasping

Give opportunities for children to grasp with the left hand/ the right hand and both.

Start with objects very close to the dominant hand and give practice on the child's left and right.

Children should have opportunities to:

- Swipe objects (e.g. hanging on activity arch)
- Open and close their hands
- Close their hands round an object
- Locate a hand-sized object and try to grasp it
- Hold hand-sized objects with palmer grip (increasing amount of time)

- Squeeze objects in the whole hand
- Use whole hand to press switch
- Pick up objects using a whole hand grasp
- Pick up and put down objects with several fingers and thumb
- Locate small objects and try to grasp them
- Hold objects using a pincer grip (increasing amount of time)
- Move at the wrist whilst holding objects
- Rotate arms (hands up and hands down) while holding objects
- Hold onto a bar (e.g. to hold themselves up) (increasing amount of time)
- Hold objects and put them in contact with another (e.g.: bang two objects together, put objects in a box, bang drum with stick)
- Crawl with object in their hand
- Grasp objects that are unseen e.g. from in a feely bag
*(Moving towards **stereognosis** – the ability to perceive and recognise the form of an object by the use of tactile information in the absence of visual and auditory clues. In terms of class activities this would mean that if a favourite toy was put in a feely bag the child could reach in and explore the object with their hands and know what it is before they see it. For preverbal children this recognition would be shown through excitement changes in facial expression and vocalisation)*

Releasing

Releasing - Children should have opportunities to:

- Allow people to take objects from their hands
- Let go of hand-sized objects
- Put down objects using a whole hand grasp
- Pass objects from hand to hand
- Hold objects with two hands, stabilise them in one and take other hand away.
- Rotate arms and drop objects
- Swap objects from hand to hand (combine grasp and release)
- Pick up and put down repeatedly– grasp and release sequences

Manipulating

Manipulating - Children should have opportunities to:

- Take objects to their mouths
- Use their hands to manipulate objects (e.g. shaking, banging, pushing, throwing)
- Use whole hand/ several fingers at once to press switches/ buttons/ keys on keyboard
- Use index finger to press buttons or poke objects
- Grasp felt tips/ brushes etc. (e.g. to make marks)
- Raise arms and drop objects into containers
- Post objects into containers (e.g. posting box)
- Place objects in specific places (e.g. simple form board/ jigsaw) (increasing precision)
- Rotate objects in their hands
- Re orientate objects in hands

Gross Motor Movement

This part of the programme can be divided into:



It is important to think how the pupil will transfer from one activity to another. Pupils should be supported and encouraged to be as independent as possible to get to their starting point but additional specialist equipment such as the hoist may be used to assist them.

Sitting

Children should have opportunities to:

- Maintain head control]
- Move their heads in all directions
- Sit in a fully supported position
- Sit in a chair with sides

- Sit on a classroom chair (no sides)
- Sit on a range of different kinds of chairs
- Sit on a stool, edge of the bed, PE form (no back or sides)
- Move their limbs in a sitting position
- Move their trunks in a sitting position
- Pivot round sideways in a sitting position
- Push or pull themselves to sitting from lying

Standing

Children should have opportunities to:

- Stand fully supported
- Stand with hands held or holding on
- Stand unsupported
- Moves their limbs whilst standing
- Pivot whilst standing (with less and less support)
- Pull or push up to standing themselves
- Stand up from a chair or stool
- Stand up from the floor
- Sit down with hands being held or holding on
- Sit down on chair or stool
- Lower themselves to the floor from standing



Walking

Children should have opportunities to:

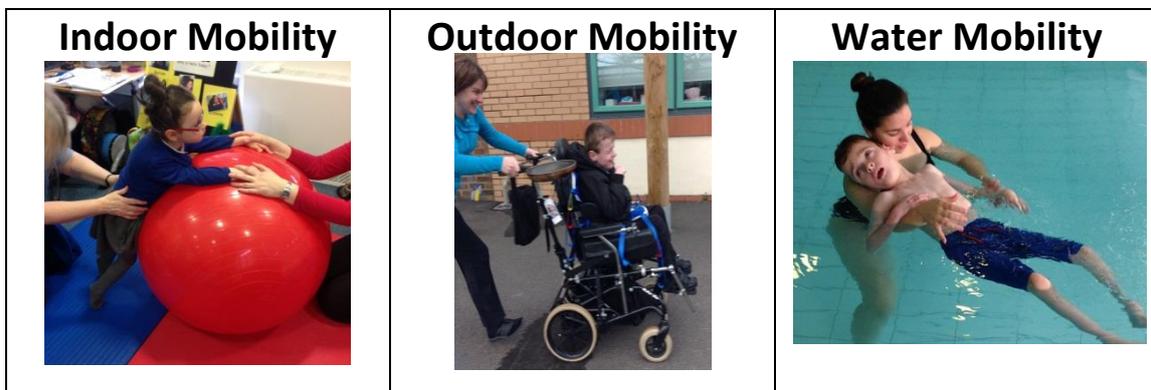
- Walk fully supported (in gait trainer) or facilitated
- Cruise along class furniture
- Walk with two hands held
- Walk pushing a (weighted) walker i.e. frame or v-tech

- Walk with one hand held
- Walk unsupported
- Take steps backwards (e.g. to sit on a chair or toilet)
- Change directions when walking (supported)
- Change directions when walking (unsupported)
- Walk on different surfaces
- Walk up and down slopes holding a rail
- Walk up and down steps holding a rail
- Walk up and down slopes
- Walk up and down steps

Mobility

Although some of mobility has been included in the sections above, we also have a separate section to encourage children to move in any way they can and to use that mobility in a range of different situations. If a particular child has physical disabilities, consult with the physiotherapists before planning mobility activities.

This part of the programme can be divided into:

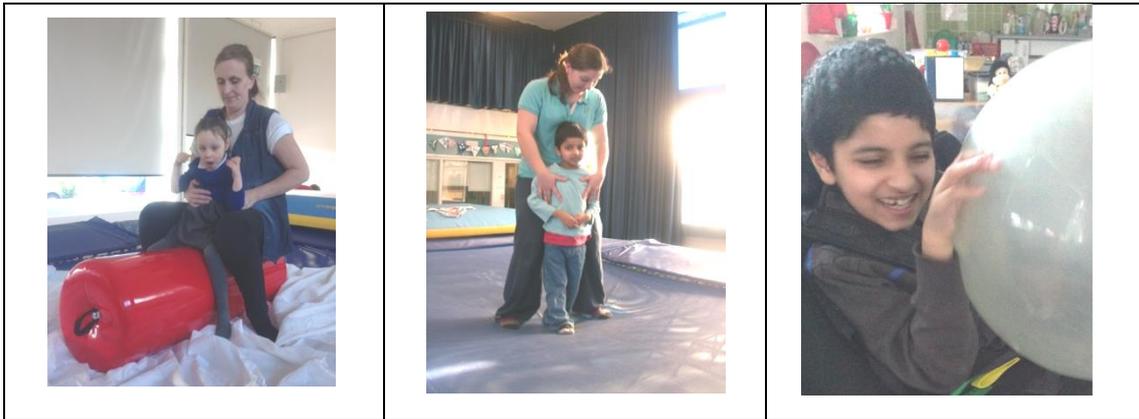


Indoor Mobility

Children should have opportunities to:

- Crawl or bottom shuffle
- Slide on back/ tummy (maybe in a blanket)
- Pivot on bottom or knees on floor
- Roll (e.g. across a mat)
- Rock/ row backwards and forwards (e.g. Row Your Boat)
- Push and pull (people and objects)
- Bounce (on trampoline)
- Throw and roll objects (balls, beanbags)

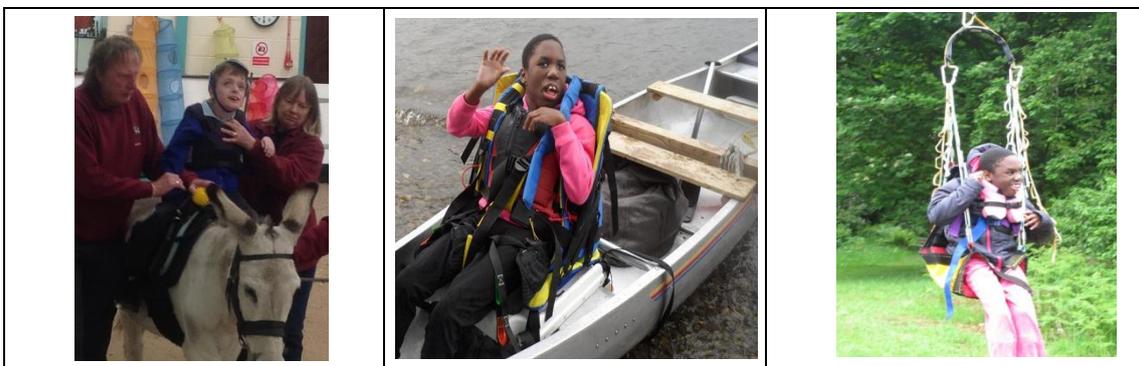
- Catch objects (from bigger to smaller)
- Move forwards and backwards
- Move in and out of objects (e.g. tunnel, den, tent)
- Move slowly and quickly (maybe being pulled in a blanket at different speeds)
- Move over and under objects/ onto and off objects



Outdoor Mobility

Many of the indoor mobility opportunities can be offered outdoors as well so this section includes the sorts of opportunities usually experienced outdoors. Again, consult with physiotherapists when working with children with physical disabilities. Some children will need full support to be able to join in the activities.

Even though children with significant physical difficulties may not be able to engage in some outdoor and adventurous experiences, there is usually a way in which they can be supported to be involved with most activities (e.g. wheelchair abseiling, sailing, horse riding, canoeing, zip wire)



Children should have opportunities to:

- Use playground/ adventure equipment to swing, slide, rotate, climb, ride.
- Ride bikes or trikes (eventually pushing the pedals themselves)
- Move over a range of different outdoor surfaces (e.g. woodland trail, shopping precinct, grass, shingle, cobbles)

Water Mobility

Many children with physical difficulties benefit from the weightlessness experienced in water and can move more freely than they can on land. Many of the movements in standing and walking can be practised in the water. The programme is mainly about the specifics of water mobility.



Children should have opportunities to:

- Enter and get out of the pool as independently as possible
- Achieve vertical balance in the water
- Back float
- Move from back to vertical
- Rotate in the water – from back to front and front to back
- Control unwanted rotations
- Move arms and legs in the water
- Jump when in the water
- Walk in deep water
- Propel themselves in the water
- Tolerate face getting wet
- Blow bubbles in the water