

LEARNING TO MOVE

5

**This module covers
the following information:**

Learning to move

Help your child look at you
and follow you with their eyes

Supporting your child to reach
and hold items

Learning to roll

Making your child's body stronger

Massaging and stretching

Monitoring progress

Sharing emotions and feelings



LEARNING TO MOVE



Materials

Flipchart, towels, toys, Diagrams 5.01 – 5.04, pens.



Icebreaker

In pairs, ask one person to sit on a chair or lie on the floor in an uncomfortable position. The other person observes and changes the position to make it more helpful, using pillows or blankets. Swap roles after a few minutes so everyone has a turn.

Discuss how each position felt.



Explain

Children learn to move initially by controlling their head, rolling, sitting, standing and even walking. Progress for young children with developmental disabilities is slower than for other children. Today we will learn practical ways to maximise your child's movement skills.

HELP YOUR CHILD LOOK AT YOU AND FOLLOW YOU WITH THEIR EYES



Activity 1

Eye contact is a first step towards communication and your child first learns this by looking at you and watching you while you move. Following a moving object or person is important for your child's head control, and for eyes and hands to work together.

Get everyone involved; fathers, grandparents and other children, and have fun and be playful... that is most likely to make your child smile!

Some things you can try are:

- Give your child things to look at – put simple pictures/ toys within reach or nearby (Homemade toys, mirrors or wearing a bright scarf/ hat are all really good, you will learn how to make homemade toys in a few sessions' time).
- Bring your face near to your child - her favourite thing to look at is your face!

- Simple black and white images (or red/white or yellow/black) are good to help a child's eyes to focus – and they are easy to make yourself. Remember to use bright colours as light ones are hard for children to see.



- If your child has trouble seeing, they may like to look at the light on your mobile phone or shiny things like foil or mirrors.
- If your child has trouble seeing and hearing, use toys that she can touch like soft fluffy fabrics, cool smooth stones, rough safe items like loofahs etc.



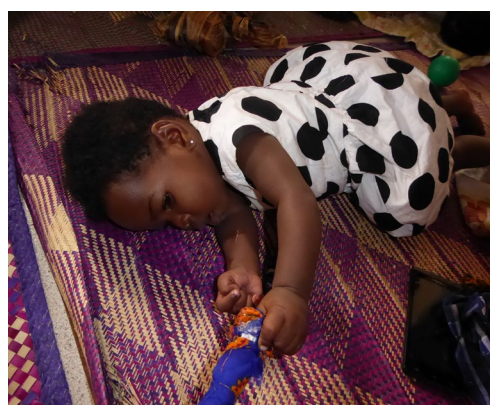
NOW PRACTICE WITH YOUR CHILD

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD TO REACH AND HOLD ITEMS



Ask

"How can you help your child learn to reach and hold things? What have you tried at home?"





Explain

- Reaching for things when lying on your back is harder because your body has to work against gravity, so practice reaching from side-lying and supported sitting instead.
- Start with your child in a very supported sitting position, so she feels balanced. If your child doesn't feel safe and comfortable then she's unlikely to try and reach forward. If she cannot hold her head well then do this in side-lying with her arms forward and hands together in front of her.
- Get your child's attention; use a brightly coloured toy/object that she likes. Hold it close and encourage her to look at it then reach for it.
- It is easier to reach for objects when they are placed low and in front of your child.
- If your child doesn't reach out, you can help guide her from the elbow, towards the object. If your child can reach towards the object but can't open her hand to hold it, gently open her hand and help her. This will help stretch stiff arms and hands.
- Once she has an object in her hand let her explore it, shake it, move it to her mouth. If she cannot do this alone you can help by gently guiding her hand.
- For holding toys, think about the size and shape of the toy/ item to make sure they can fit easily into small hands.



Ask

"What things at home do you have that would be easy and safe for your child to hold?"

Noisy, shiny, bright objects or foods can be good to motivate a child to try and reach out.



NOW PRACTICE WITH YOUR CHILD

When practicing reaching and holding, praise your child if they try. Keep praising them with every effort and improvement, even if small.

LEARNING TO ROLL



Ask

"How do you think you can help your child to learn to roll? What things have you tried at home?"



Explain

- Start with side lying and get your child's attention with a toy. Move the toy in the direction needed for her to roll onto her back. As she follows with her eyes and head, her body will start to follow. If needed you can encourage her gently by bending the top leg at hip and knee, and gently twisting the hips, to get her to roll back.
- Then try laying your child on her stomach. Pull her arm forward on the side you want her to roll towards, then as before encourage her to follow a toy with her eyes and head, assisting if needed.
- Keep repeating this exercise, using less and less support as your child's body gets more used to the movement.
- If your child is very stiff then it may be hard for her to learn to roll and she may not learn until she is older. Keep practicing rolling but also make sure you are practicing the other skills too.



NOW PRACTICE WITH YOUR CHILD



MAKING YOUR CHILD'S BODY STRONGER



Explain

Even if your child can't crawl or stand on her own, you can help her learn to hold her weight with her arms or legs. This helps to make your child's bones stronger, reduces stiffness, and increases strength in a floppy child.

Good ways to start weight bearing are:

1. Lying on the stomach using her arms, elbows or hands to hold herself up.

2. Kneeling

Hold your child in position.

3. Crawling position

You can place your child in this position over your legs or over a rolled up blanket to start with.

4. Supported standing (briefly discussed in the positioning module).

Reinforce that it is important:

- To strengthen the legs.
- To protect the hips.
- Being upright helps children who have chest infections or trouble breathing.
- To help the emptying of the bladder and bowels (useful if your child is often constipated).
- Helps your child see around her and be more involved with family activities and communications.

How to practice standing with your child:

- Standing on your knee while you hold her body (good for smaller children).
- Standing in between your legs while you are seated, use one leg to support her legs and hips and the other to support her bottom.
- Leaning your child against your legs either while you are standing or when you are sitting. (This position and the following one need the child to be more stable in standing than the first 2 positions.)



- Leaning your child against a stable object – a bed or armchair. Make sure you stay next to her so she doesn't fall.
- Using a standing frame (these are good as your child gets bigger, ask the local hospital if they make them).



NOW PRACTICE WITH YOUR CHILD

MASSAGING AND STRETCHING



Explain

Moving, twisting, massaging and stretching are all ways that we can loosen your child's stiff body. This will help her to move and you to handle and care for her.

1. Good positioning

If your child is stiff and does not move enough, her muscles will become tight and short. A good position can keep her muscles long. For example, if your child tends to 'curl/bend' herself up then lying on her tummy and standing are good stretches.

2. Use time in your daily routine

- Playing with your child and encouraging her to move. Movements help her stretch her muscles.
- Helping your child reach for and hold toys (guiding her hand out or up towards a toy).
- Make sure you are gentle and slow with stretches otherwise you may hurt your child.

Do not force the joints to move, watch and listen for signs your child is in pain and reduce your effort. It is best to consult a health worker - or a therapist (such as a physiotherapist) if they are available locally.



NOW PRACTICE MASSAGING YOUR CHILD

MONITORING PROGRESS



Ask

Ask everyone to act out one new movement they have learnt today which they will show to another family member.

Take Home Messages:

- Children with developmental disabilities do learn and develop but they need extra time and support.
- You can help your child develop by spending time each day playing and practising the skills they need to learn (head control, sitting, rolling etc).
- The more you practice skills with your child the more opportunity they have to learn.

SHARING EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS



Ask

"How did you find talking about today's subject? Did it raise any emotions or feelings that you did not expect? How have you been feeling this week?"

Allow time for discussion and interaction with each other.