

Children's Therapy and Family Resource Centre

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Physiotherapy Suggestions in the Pool

Swimming is a great overall strengthening and endurance activity. The water is an excellent medium for supporting the body and making movements easier due to the buoyancy.

Floatation devices may be used to help support your child in the water and also give him some freedom. With a life jacket on he will have to work the trunk and neck muscles to keep his head out of the water. This will also give him the freedom to use his arms and legs to propel himself in the water.

Examples of some equipment or toys you can use in the pool or even the bathtub are:

- o straws
- o hoses
- o wash clothes
- o water wings
- o ping-pong balls
- o sponges
- o water cans
- o plastic containers
- o snakes or paddle board
- o tub
- o waterproof toys
- o hats
- o balls of all sizes

Use balls to sink or hold under the water, pitchers or containers to pour water, flutter boards to hold onto while kicking legs to move forwards, foam toys to dunk under the water. The water will add a gentle resistance to his movements for strengthening.

Use sponges to squeeze water for strengthening arm and hand muscles.

Use straws, or floating ping-pong balls to "blow" across the water will exercise the breathing muscles. Use a mound of shaving cream on the surface of the water, encourage your child to blow on it to make it move.

Walking in the water with your child hanging on to the edge of the pool will be easier as gravity is eliminated

Emphasize movements of his arms and legs.

If you have any questions about this information, please contact your Physiotherapist.