

Rhythmic Movements/ Activities for the Stress-Related Reflexes

By: Petros Chalkitis MS OTR/L



- 1. Slow Rocking on a Ball:** Have the child lay on their belly on the large ball and slowly rock the ball back and forth while you have your hands on their back with a soft touch. The child can also touch his arms on the floor in front of them when being rocked forward and his feet on the floor in the back when they are rocked backwards.



- 2. Passive movement from ankles in supine**

Have the child lay on their back, arms on their side. Make sure the child is symmetrical. Place the child's ankles in your palms and pull towards you in a smooth, fluid and rhythmical way. Notice the child and adjust speed to their liking. Start slow, give a few seconds of each movement and build it up over time. Do exercise 1-2 times a day. Notice for signs of dysregulation of the nervous system and immediately stop. This movement can also help integrate the TLR.





3. **Passive Bottom Rolling in Prone**

Have the child lay on their belly with arms either on their side or both hands on their forehead. Feet should be on the floor relaxed, or use a towel under the feet. Place one hand on their lower back then rhythmically, smoothly and fluidly, roll the bottom from side to side. This movement is my favorite, brings emotional relaxation to the child and helps integrate the Amphibian and spinal reflexes.



4. **Steamrolling with Large Ball:**

Have the child lay down on their stomach on a soft mat and roll the large ball across their extremities and back rhythmically and with an equal firm pressure.





- 5. Rocking on Hands & Knees (active):** Have the child on hands and knees, and rhythmically bounce back and forth (to feet and back to starting point). When a child is able to, you can begin using a metronome.



PRECAUTIONS for Rhythmic Movements: Children with Down's Syndrome or Seizure Disorders, make sure to get a doctor's clearance before beginning the exercise program.



References

Brandes, L.B. (2015). *The Symphony of Reflexes. Interventions for Human Development, Autism, ADHD, CP and other Neurological Disorders.*

Blomberg, H. (2015). *The Rhythmic Movement Method: A Revolutionary Approach to Improved Health and Well-Being.*

Dempsey, M. (2019). *Beyond the Sea Squirt: A Journey with Reflexes.*

Story, S. (2007-21). *Brain and Sensory Foundations, First Level (Training Manual).*

Story, S. (2017-21). *Brain and Sensory Foundations, Second Level (Training Manual).*