

# Occupational Therapy & Physical Therapy Program

## General Guides for Functional Activities for Students with Moderate to Severe Disabilities

**\*\*Safety is a priority. Do not perform any of these activities if you feel your child's safety is at risk!**

Allow child to assist as much as possible, in a safe manner. Try not do activity for child. Provide only as much support as necessary.

It is important to provide opportunities for children to be in different positions throughout the day, to the greatest extent possible.

### A. LYING DOWN ACTIVITIES

If a child is typically in a wheelchair, the child can be placed on a mat on the floor or on a firm bed, using pillows to support head, as well as other parts of the child's body, depending on the position.

#### 1. On child's back, have child:

- Try to track a toy and rotate head.
- Reach for a favorite toy, or your hand.
- If able, move from lying down to sitting up (pull to sit) with your help.
- Try to roll to either side – may need to use a motivating toy.



Back Lying Position

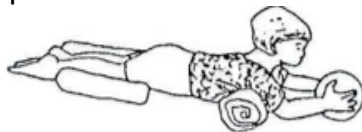
#### 2. On the child's side, have child:

- Attempt to reach a toy or your hand with hand that is free, if able.



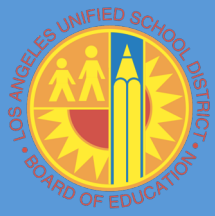
#### 3. On the child's stomach (if able to do so in a safe and comfortable manner):

- Assist your child to prop up onto forearms or extended arms (if able).



- If child is able to prop him/herself on forearms, have child attempt to maintain position and reach with one hand at a time to an object or toy in front of child. Alternate arms, if able.
- Assist your child to transition to quadruped, if able. Have child attempt to maintain this position for a little while, with/without your assistance.





# Occupational Therapy & Physical Therapy Program

## General Guides for Functional Activities for Students with Moderate to Severe Disabilities

### B. SEATED ACTIVITIES

If your child can sit on the floor (with or without help) child can also participate in these activities.

1. On the floor, you can place your child in tailor sitting (criss-cross), side-sitting, long sitting or ring sitting. To support your child, you can sit behind him or her, straddling child's body with your legs.
  - a. You can work on head control here, having your child attempt to keep his head upright in a neutral position. If child is not able to keep head upright, you may have your him/her recline slightly onto your body to support child's head.
  - b. If he/she is able to place their hands in front and to the side slightly, you can have him/her attempt to prop themselves in sitting.
  - c. If your child can sit without much support, have him/her participate in activities that require them to use his/her hands, as well as shift his/her weight to the right or left.



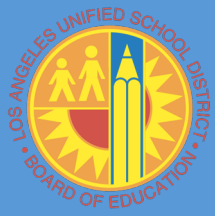
2. In a chair, you can have your child sit in a chair in which you feel child is safe to sit with arm and back supports.
  - a. Have your child participate in activities that require him/her to use child's hands, as well as shift his/her weight to the right or left, as well as reaching up and behind child, if able.

### C. STANDING ACTIVITIES

If your child is able to stand with/without support) he/she can also participate in these activities.

**\*\*Always have an adult stand next to your child while doing these activities.**

1. If your child needs physical assistance to stand, have an adult support child.
  - a. You can have child stand at a stable table or counter, so that he/she can lean against it. You can sit in a chair behind child and support his/her trunk and position his/her legs.
  - b. Have child attempt to stand at a table, while completing a puzzle, watching a short video, or any other toys child enjoys.

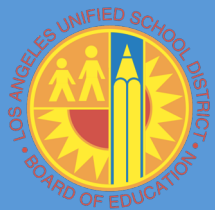


# Occupational Therapy & Physical Therapy Program

## General Guides for Functional Activities for Students with Moderate to Severe Disabilities

### C. STANDING ACTIVITIES (continued):

1. Stand at the wall (either against a flat wall or in a corner, for more support).
  - a. Participate in games such as art activities in standing, completing puzzles, balloon toss, catch, kicking a ball.
2. Stand without support.
  - a. Participate in above games (#2).
  - b. Walk around obstacles placed in the middle of the room.
  - c. Walk and step over low obstacles (1-2 inches high).
  - d. Walking over uneven surfaces, such as soft pillows, grass, sand, hills.



## Positioning for Students Lying Down

*\*Safety is a priority.\**

*\*Do not perform any of these activities if you feel your child's safety is at risk!\**

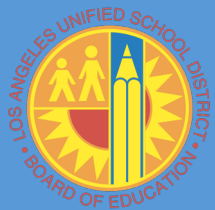
If a student is spending an extended amount of time lying down for lessons the student should be positioned in a way that is comfortable but also supports range of motion (how well joints move) and alignment.

*A. If your child has a tendency to maintain their legs in a "windswept" or sideways position when lying on his or her back:*

1. Place a pillow between their knees so their knees are approximately hip width apart (or as close to hip width as tolerated comfortably).
2. Place a large pillow or cushion on the outside of the leg that is pointing away from his or her body to bring legs to a more centered position.
3. If knees are unable to straighten, place a pillow, rolled blanket, or rolled towel under the knees to help support the student's legs.
4. To avoid pressure on the heels, it may be beneficial to place a rolled towel behind the ankles.



It is important to change positions throughout the day to prevent skin breakdown. This is just one position that can be utilized.



## Positioning for Students Lying Down

*B. If your child has a tendency to keep their hips in a flexed or bent position (as if partially sitting in a chair) and does not tolerate positioning on their stomach, you can place them in a sidelying position with cushions to support.*

1. Place a pillow under the head to help maintain neck alignment in line with spine.
2. Place a pillow or cushion under their top leg. You can also place a pillow between their arms or behind their back if they need support for their upper body.
3. Slide their bottom leg back towards being in line with their back as far as it can be easily moved. This will help provide some stretch to the front of that hip.

