**Pump up your Pre-K!**

**Presenters: Erin Reilly, Renee Bingham, Natalie Johnsey**

**Equipment:** Rubber chickens, poly spots, ball on a rope, tug-of war rope, light medicine ball, long rope, ½ pool noodles, spider on a string, hula hoops

***1. Yellow Wall*** (rename for your designated area to return to for transitions or games):

Purpose: Classroom management, reflex integration, locomotor skills.

The teacher will call out an animal, everybody pretend to be the animal, and when teacher calls out "yellow wall!" everyone run to the yellow wall, stand back to the wall, eyes on teacher, listen for the next animal. The purpose of the game is to teach the management technique of having all children gather at the yellow wall and stop, look, and listen to teacher during transitions. "When I say go, everybody walk like a bear"... "Go!" After about 15 seconds call out "Yellow Wall!" Make sure all children run to the wall as quick as possible, look at teacher, and listen for directions. Do another animal. Keep practicing and praise them when they all quickly do what they are told.

Variation: Use locomotor skills (walk, run, skip, gallop, slide, hop, jump, leap) instead of animal walks.

**2. *Knees, Toes, Chicken!*:**

Purpose: Crossing midline, reaction time, body part identification.

Directions: Partners face each other in a cross-legged seated position ("criss cross apple sauce") with a rubber chicken between them. Call out various body parts and randomly have them cross or uncross. For example call out "knees" and the children should touch both knees. "Cross your knees" means the children touch right knee with left hand and left knee with right hand. "Uncross your knees" means touch right hand to right knee and left hand to left knee. After calling several body parts call out "Chicken!" and the children try to grab the chicken before their partner. Place the chicken back in the middle for another round. If grabbing the chicken is a problem just see who can touch the chicken first. Young children love this game! If chickens are not available bean bags, yarn balls, plastic fruit, etc. can be used.

**3. *Red, Blue, Chicken!*:**

Purpose: ATNR and STNR integration, core strength, crossing midline.

Directions:

Round 1- Partners face each other in a seated position. Place a red poly spot to one side between them, a blue poly spot on the other side (or any two colors), and a rubber chicken in the middle. The children place their hands behind their back and wait for the teacher to call out red, blue, or chicken! If red or blue is called the children touch the poly spot and then return hands behind back for the next call. If Chicken! is called out, they try to see who can grab the chicken the fastest. Return the chicken to the middle and continue.

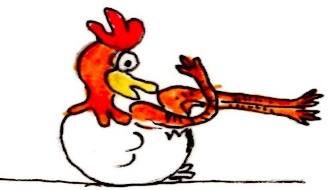
Round 2- Once they understand the concept, have the children get into a quadruped position on hands and knees and continue.

Round 3- Play from a plank position on hands and feet. If this is too challenging for a child he or she can return to quadruped for a little rest, but should be encouraged to keep trying to play in the plank position.

Round 4- Play from a super chicken position.

Variations: Incorporate academics by using numbers, letters, sight words, pictures of animals, etc. instead of colored poly spots.

***4. Chicken Nugget and French Fry:***

Purpose: core strength.  

Directions: All children get into a chicken nugget position and hold it. When the teacher calls out "French Fry!" the children flip over and get in the super chicken position. Continue for several rounds.

***5. Crazy Ball***:

Purpose: Visual tracking, agility, motor planning, proprioception

Directions: Put a hula hoop in the middle of the play area. Have the children help put all the medicine balls (or yarn balls, bean bags, etc.) in the hoop as quick as possible. Teacher stand by the hoop with the "crazy ball." Make sure children are out of reach of the rope and explain the game. The teacher will swing the rope around with a soft ball on the end (a ball in a cloth bag with the rope tied to the handles will work). The children need to work together to get all of the treasure (equipment) out of the dragons lair without getting hit by the crazy ball, and put the treasure back in the treasure chest (equipment basket).

Variation: Instead of having the children get equipment, swing the ball in a wide, low, arc and instruct them to try to make it from one side of the room to the other without getting hit.

***6. Tug-of-War***:

Purpose: proprioception, grip strength, and upper body strength. (use soft, smaller diameter rope)

Directions: Divide the class into two groups, evenly space each team toward the ends of a tug-of-war type rope facing the center, and put one teacher on each end. Space children evenly apart so that all have enough room. The children pull on the rope trying to force the other side across the center line. In order to prolong the game and keep children safe, teachers should control the rope, signaling each other when to let up or pull hard.

**Note: Keep the children safe by controlling the rope, watch out for children falling down, and do not let them wrap the rope around their hands or bodies.**

**7. *Hot Potato:***

Purpose: Proprioception, crossing midline (core strength and reflex integration for the variations)

Directions: Have groups of 5-9 children sit in a circle and pass a medicine ball around the circle to each other. Choose a weight based on appropriateness for the smallest child in the group. Play music, and when the music stops the child holding the ball has to do some kind of exercise and then rejoin the group. The exercise should not take more than 5-10 seconds. This is an exciting game for young children and they will pass the ball quickly. Watch and try to stop the music so that every child gets caught holding the potato at least once.

Variations: This can also be done while standing on one leg, or holding a plank, chicken nugget, or super chicken position. When combining an exercise with the game let the children rest when the music is stopped.

***8. Jump the River*:**

Purpose: proprioception and vestibular system.

Stretch two ropes or stretchy bands across the middle of the space, flat on the ground, side by side a few inches apart. Make sure there is room for a running start to "jump the river" and room to slow to a stop after the jump. Have all children start from the same side of the room and jump the river on the go signal. Spread the river a few more inches apart and repeat. Make sure the children wait for the "go" signal before running to avoid collisions. Wiggle the ropes for waves!

Variation with a long rope: teacher holds the end of the long rope to make the river. If another adult is not available to hold the other end, either tie the other end to something like a desk leg or playground equipment, or have children take turns holding the other end. Make sure everyone is safely on one side before calling "jump the river!" Lift the rope a little higher each time. Wiggle the rope to make waves. If the rope gets too high to jump over, they can "crawl under the bridge." If the rope is a little lower at one end than the other children can pick the side that is the appropriate level of challenge for them.

***9. Kids in the Hoop:***

Purpose: Can be used for all areas.

Directions: Scatter different colored hula hoops around the area. Call out a locomotor skill, neuromotor exercise, or animal walk for the kids to do. After 10-30 seconds call out a color. Children all find a hoop of that color and squish in together. Repeat with a new skill each time.

***10. Noodle Wackers*:**

Purpose: Proprioception, crossing midline, visual perception.

Directions: Cut noodles in half and make sure there are enough for each child. Instruct the children to get a "light saber" (noodle), get in their own personal space, and practice drawing a figure 8 in the air. Remind them to watch their hands as they make the figure 8s. Once all children have a light saber and have practiced figure 8s, instruct them to turn on their light sabers and start wacking each other! No hitting to the face or head. In groups with wide variations in sizes of children you may need to divide them into different groups, or just let them wack a partner.

***11. Super Heroes:***

Purpose: Reflex integration, core strength

Directions: Super heroes is a simple game consisting of crawling like Spiderman and then flipping over to fly like Superman on the signal. If space permits all children can cross the floor at the same time. On the "go" signal the children begin crawling like Spiderman going up the wall (commando style), and then when the teacher calls out "Superman!" all children go into the Superman pose. After about 15-20 seconds call out "Spiderman!" and children resume crawling.

**12. *Swat the Spider*** (or fly, or any other bug):

Purpose: Proprioception, visual perception.

Directions: Get a toy spider (or other bug), attach a string, pull the spider around the room while the children try to swat it with a noodle.

Variation: Paste picture of bug to a plastic plate, attach string, and pull around the room. For large groups have more than one bug to swat and let children take turns being the bug or the swatter.

***13. Don't Break the Circle:***

Purpose: proprioception, grip strength

Directions: Whole group (or about 10-20 children) holds hands in one big circle. Slowly walk back as far as possible, hang on tight, and try to make it to a count of 10 without breaking the circle. Challenge the group to increase the amount of time each week. Good closing activity.

***14. Red Light/Green Light:***

Purpose: reflex integration, locomotor skills, self-modulation

Directions: Use a green and a red visual prop to indicate "red light" and "green light." Instruct the children to do locomotor skills (walk, run, jump, hop, skip, gallop, leap, slide), animal walks, crawls, or hold a "steering wheel" (paper plate, poly spot, flying disc) and pretend to be a car. The children move around the play space when the "green light" is held up, and must freeze when "red light" is held up by the teacher. Children are not eliminated if they do not stop immediately but are reminded to pay attention so they can avoid crashing!

Variation: Use auditory instead of, or in addition to, visual cues.