



PHYSIOTHERAPY

Let's get moving with Physiotherapy!

Deaf Connect Physiotherapists (PTs) work with you and your child to develop:

- Gross motor skills – whole body movement
- Balance
- Coordination
- Core stability
- Motor planning – sequencing movements
- Hand eye coordination
- Spatial awareness.

PTs aim to help your child develop these skills so they can play with their friends, look after themselves, and develop the skills they need for school and life.

How do PTs help Deaf and hard of hearing children?

Young Deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children are learning to communicate in the way that best suits them and their families. Social interaction with other children – playing, exploring their environment and shared learning – helps to develop language and communication. Some DHH children have challenges with their vestibular system and core stability, which can mean their ability to interact, play and explore may be decreased. PTs support children with these difficulties to develop their core stability and gross motor skills so they can join in and have fun!



The vestibular system and hearing loss/deafness

The vestibular system is located in the inner ear and allows us to coordinate movement with balance. It contributes to spatial orientation and posture and is essential for coordinating the position of our heads with the movement of our eyes. There is a close association between vestibular function and gross motor performance.

Core stability and hearing loss/deafness

Core stability is the ability to stabilise our trunks and necks to enable us to coordinate other limbs (for activities such as walking or jumping). If core stability is poor then it is difficult to balance, perform coordinated movements on both sides of the body and maintain sitting posture. It's also important for key tasks like paying attention, writing, drawing and using scissors! Decreased core strength can contribute to delayed motor skill development, and make it challenging to participate in group activities, which can in turn affect the development of language and communication.

What strategies do PTs use?

Screening and assessment

Through regular screening and assessment PTs can identify any difficulties your child is having with movement, and then develop a therapy program to target any problems identified. PTs observe a child's gait or movement patterns and posture, and assess a child's balance, coordination, spatial awareness, core stability, muscle strength and muscle tone. Screening and assessment informs an individualised therapy plan for your child.

Play!

PTs use play-based activities with your child. They'll have fun jumping, throwing, running, balancing and climbing – they won't even know they're working hard! These activities specifically target things like coordination of movement, planning, balance, spatial awareness, core stability, muscle strengthening and the development of proprioception (awareness of body position and movement). The PTs can also show you how to adapt what you have at home for your child to continue practising.

Assistive technology and equipment

PTs can also assess and make recommendations for assistive technology such as orthotics, walking aides, seating devices or mobility aids if required.

Want to know more?

You can contact our team for support by emailing therapy.info@deafconnect.org.au