

Eyes Need to Move Too!



An activity guide for under-fives



**SPORT
NEW ZEALAND**

On 1 Feb 2012, SPARC
changed its name to Sport NZ.
www.sportnz.org.nz

? What is Active Movement/ Koringa Hihiko?

😊 Active Movement is just as important for newborns as it is for older children. By helping your child to get active, you help their body to develop, you help them to learn and to feel safe, and you show them they are loved.

The Active Movement series of brochures helps you with ideas for fun activities.





? Why is eye movement important?

- 😊 From very early on in a child's life, Active Movement activities for the eyes are essential, as they help to develop control of the eye muscle.
- 😊 Our eyes work together, but see images separately, so it is important to develop fine control of the eyes so that similar images are sent to the brain. The brain then combines the information and makes one image.
- 😊 Good eye muscle control helps to keep the eyes straight during movement so you can see things in front of you, and beside you. It also helps to make images appear steady.
- 😊 When the eyes are controlled without effort, our attention is available for visual concentration, following words on a page when reading, and following moving objects when participating in games and sports.

? How do you use your eyes to imagine?

- 😊 When you talk on the telephone, you can see or imagine the person you are speaking to in your head. When you read a book you imagine the scene and the characters and form a picture of this in your head. This is called **visualisation**. When constantly staring at television screens, all the visual information is there, so we don't have to imagine. The more we look at television screens, the less chance we have of developing this important visualisation skill.

Activities for Newborns and Infants

He ngohe mā ngā Pēpi



These activities can also be done with toddlers and young children.



It is important to encourage activities where the head stays still and just the eyes move. You may need to hold the child's head gently in some of these activities to encourage eye muscle movement only.

My eyes get stronger if I practise looking at moving objects without moving my head.





- ▶ When reading, slowly point to different things in the pictures at different places on the page. This encourages his eyes to move.



- ▶ Use bubbles when she is in the bath. Always stay with your child when they are near water.



More activities you can do with your newborn and infant, next page ▶

More activities to do with newborns and infants

- ▶ Lie him on his tummy and roll a toy across his body. Roll it on the floor too – away from him and towards him. (This encourages eye movements and also upper body strength.)



- ▶ Place a finger puppet on your finger and move it gently from one side to the other and up and down while she watches, keeping her head still. This activity can also be done by playing aeroplane or train games with food to encourage eye movements.

- ▶ Play finger games like 'Two Little Dickey Birds'. These games encourage eyes to move in both directions.





Activities for Toddlers

He ngohe mā ngā Tamariki Nohinohi



These activities can also be done with young children.



For more ideas to develop eye fitness and movement see the brochure **Catching, Throwing and Kicking**.

**My eyes get
stronger if I
practise looking at
moving objects
without moving
my head.**

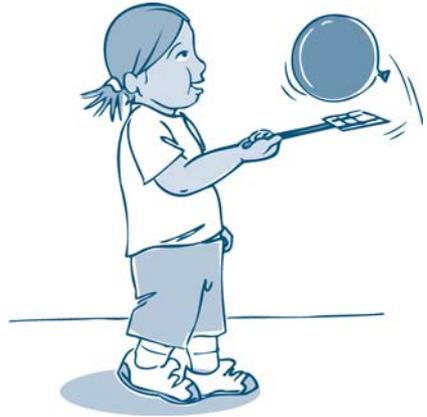


More activities you can do with your toddler, next page 

More activities to do with toddlers

▶ Give her a small ruler to hold. Blow bubbles and ask her to catch the bubbles on the ruler.

▶ Blow up a balloon and, using a foil tube or clean fly swat, have him hit the balloon up and down as many times as he can.



▶ Spin slowly on merry go-rounds, swings and other playground equipment or simply roll down a hill.

▶ Play skittles (develops short-range and long-range vision).





Activities for Young Children

He ngohe mā ngā Kōhungahunga



These activities can also be done with toddlers.



**I learn to see things
in my head by playing
imagination games.**



▶ Use different voices for the characters or dress up as the characters when reading a story.

▶ Act out the characters in a story – you and your child can pretend to be the different characters/animals or things in a story e.g. the fire engine, a donkey etc.

▶ Before sleep, tell a make believe story with no pictures. Then he has to imagine the scene and the characters. Talk about both with him and compare what you thought of and what he did.

▶ Turn 3 sets of pairs of cards face down on the floor or table, see if she can match the pairs of cards by turning two of them face up one at a time. If they don't match turn them face down again and try to match another two cards.

😊 Eyesight and the development of visual abilities are hugely important to quality of life and enjoyment of learning. Optometrists recommend that a child's eyes are tested at 6 months of age, at 2½ years of age, before commencing school and every two years thereafter.

😊 An optometrist will carefully examine your child's visual abilities and diagnose, treat or refer if needed.

😊 To find an optometrist in your region visit the NZAO website www.nzao.co.nz or look in the yellow pages directory.

😊 Your optometrist can also advise if you are eligible for assistance under the Children's Glasses Subsidy.



? Where do I go for more information?

😊 This brochure is one of a series of 16 Active Movement resources:



Acknowledgements SPARC (Sport and Recreation New Zealand) express their sincere appreciation to the people and organisations who have contributed both directly and indirectly to this Active Movement resource.



Further information can be found on the SPARC website or call 0800 ACTIVE (0800 22 84 83).

www.sparc.org.nz

