

# Balance: Swinging, Spinning and Rocking



An activity guide for under-fives



**SPORT  
NEW ZEALAND**

On 1 Feb 2012, SPARC  
changed its name to Sport NZ.  
[www.sportnz.org.nz](http://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 balance important?

😊 Movement such as swinging, spinning and rocking helps develop your child's sense of balance. Her balance system starts to develop before birth and will continue to develop until adulthood.

### **Good balance helps your child:**

- keep his balance
- know how she fits into a space
- stay still when sitting, standing or lying
- develop eye movement and vision.

Good balance is supported by having strong back and tummy muscles. So infants and children need constant activity to develop these areas.

## ? What do I need to know before I start?

😊 It is important to do the following activities **slowly** and always spin in **both directions**.

😊 All activities are for boys **and** girls.

😊 It is the **order** in which they gain body skills that is important, not **the age** that they gain them.

😊 Remember, when children are active, stay around them to **keep them safe**.

# Activities for Newborns and Infants

He ngohe mā ngā Pēpi



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

**My balance improves  
when I am moved around  
in space.**



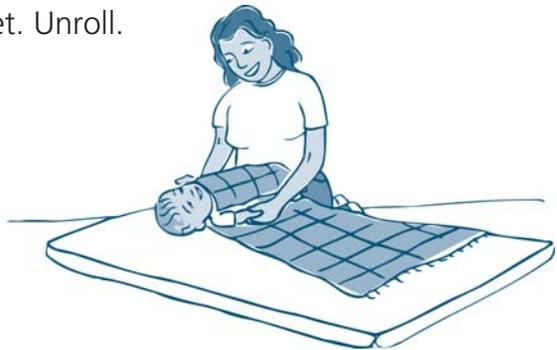


- ▶ Hold and support baby while dancing to music. Slowly move him up and down, round and round to the music.



- ▶ Sit on the floor with him on your lap. Rock backwards and forwards gently.

- ▶ Roll gently in a blanket. Unroll.



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

## More activities to do with newborns and infants

- ▶ Lay her over your knees when sitting and lift alternate knees.



- ▶ Lay him on his back, lift right leg up and cross over the left leg. Repeat using other leg.



- ▶ Gently supporting baby, spin slowly and then spin the other way.

# Activities for Toddlers

## He ngohe mā ngā Tamariki Nohinohi



These activities can also be done with young children.

**My balance  
improves if I spin,  
swing and rock.**



More activities you can do with your toddler, next page 

## More activities to do with toddlers

- ▶ Sit on a chair with your toddler sitting on your ankles or knees. Bounce her up and down. There are lots of songs or rhymes that can be sung while she bounces.



- ▶ Lie on the floor with your legs up. Your toddler is lying on the soles of your feet while you support his hands. Gently move your feet around like he is flying.



- ▶ Hold her under her armpits and around her chest facing away from you. Swing her legs slowly from side to side or back and forward through your legs.





- Sit him on a large towel on a slippery floor. Spin the towel **slowly**. Make sure he holds onto the towel and that the spinning is not too fast – we don't want him to fall off!



- Stand with legs apart and knees bent and rock from left to right to a rhythm. Encourage him to slap his knees in time to the beat.



- If you have an office chair at home, sit on it with him on your knee. Spin slowly. Go the other way.



# Activities for Young Children

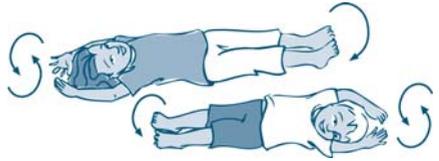
## He ngohe mā ngā Kōhungahunga

**My balance improves  
if I spin, swing, rock  
and hang.**





- ▶ Have her lie on the floor with hands stretched above her head. Roll slowly one way along the ground, then the other.



- ▶ If you have an office chair, she can lie on the seat on her tummy and spin slowly (both ways).

- ▶ Hold her hand to assist her to swing a poi (or a stocking/sock stuffed with tissue). Start by swinging the poi from side to side at below waist height, then try swinging in a full circle.



- ▶ Help him to hang upside down on the bars at the park. Make sure he holds on with his hands. Sometimes it's nice to support him gently under his back.



# ? 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](http://www.sparc.org.nz)