

Positioning for Play

During physical play time, children tend to move through various positions and during sedentary play time children tend to maintain the same position for a longer period of time. For example, when playing hide and go seek children move in all different ways such as sitting, crawling, squatting, walking or running. In contrast, when completing a puzzle, using blocks or playing a tabletop game, children may stay in one position for a longer period of time. It is beneficial to be aware of ideal positioning during play. In general, it is helpful to change positions every 20-30 minutes to prevent asymmetries in muscles and bad habits. Most of the time during play, children will move in and out of positions frequently which is wonderful. When children are in one position for a longer period of time, there are some general guidelines based on the position of the child.

Child is lying on back to play

- head in midline and comfortable
- back is straight
- legs are uncrossed or child is actively moving legs
- shoulders are forward encouraging hands to come to midline for play

Child is on belly (prone positioning)

- body is straight with head in midline
- hips and knees are straight
- shoulders are slightly forward or directly underneath
- use small pillow under chest if necessary for support
- hands are open if possible

Child is sitting on the floor

- use cross legged position, long sitting (legs out front) or side sitting (switching sides)
- avoid w-sitting (legs turned inwards, knees touching and lower legs out to sides)
- sit with back support if needed to free up the hands for play

Child is sitting in a chair at a table

- the feet should have a stable base of support
- hips, knees and ankles should be bent at 90 degrees
- table should be 1-2" higher than bent elbows

Child is standing

- hips and knees are straight (knees are not locked)
- feet are on the ground, slightly apart with toes pointing forward or slightly outward
- frequently check to make sure the child has heel contact on the floor

These pages are not intended to provide medical advice or physician/therapist instruction. Information provided should not be used for diagnostic or training purposes. Consult a therapist or physician regarding specific diagnoses or medical advice.