

Occupational Therapy Advice Sheet

Hypermobility

Hypermobility refers to when a child has too much movement within their joints. This can occur in all or with only a few joints within the body. Some children with hypermobility may not experience any issues; however for some children their supporting and stabilising muscles may be weaker which can result in some of the difficulties outlined below.

Possible difficulties children may experience:

- Fatigue in their muscles and joints
- Pain due to their muscles working harder to stabilise the joint and/or repetition of certain movements or activity
- Poor co-ordination
- Difficulties with activities of daily living such as handwriting and dressing e.g. buttons/zips
- Understanding the location of their body in space (body awareness)



Strategies to support the child:

- Encourage the child to engage in slow gentle movements to move their joints to the full range of movement every day
- Discourage activities or actions that cause the child considerable pain and cause stress to the joint
- Help the child find new ways of carrying out an action or activity decreasing the risk of injuring the joint e.g. distributing the weight of heavy items when carrying
- Encourage participation in low impact muscle strengthening activities such as swimming and walking
- Encourage regular gentle activity every day and avoid inactivity. Maintaining a healthy body weight will reduce the potential for added stress to the joints
- Encourage regular rest breaks throughout the day, particularly if the child experiences fatigue
- Encourage gentle stretching breaks throughout the day
- Avoid keeping joints in the same position for long periods of time
- The use of pen grips and large handled cutlery can reduce discomfort when engaging in everyday activity
- Aids and supports are generally discouraged as they can exasperate muscle weakness. However they can be used whilst participating in particular activities e.g. playing a musical instrument if the activity would not be possible without support