**Guidelines for Teaching Motor Imitation Skills**

(Adapted from Susan Brown, OT-IU 13 Preschool Program)

.  The following guidelines are provided for use with those students who, after some structured programming, fail to progress.  It is not intended for you to use from beginning to end with all students.  The targets provided are suggestions, and certainly not an all-inclusive list.  If you choose to use these tracking sheets, please make sure you do not master motor imitation based only on the early sheets (one part body and body movements with integration of both sides of the body).  With that being said, here are some considerations when looking at programming for motor imitation.

1. **Motivation**:  We need to make sure that we are introducing motor imitation programming to children who already show interest in the behaviors of others or can be motivated to show interest under conditions signaling the availability of strong reinforcers *(Imitation is such a necessary early program that we need to capture and contrive motivation early in the instructional process).*
2. **Motor Skill / Ability**: In selecting targets, we need to take a look at the child’s motoric developmental level.  If there are delays in this area, we may want to look at choosing targets based on skills that we have seen the child already accomplish spontaneously, working to get these under adult control.
3. **Instructional Control**:  It is important to be able to identify when the child is able to emit the response requirements of imitative behavior (in other words, the child has acquired a generalized imitative repertoire). This will allow you to determine when you are able to probe more quickly through the sequences rather than master all targets within each section.  The ultimate goal is to teach generalized imitation skills that can be applied to novel situations.
4. **Teaching Imitation of Actions with Objects**:  This is a critical skill component in the overall motor imitation sequence. Imitating actions on objects often is acquired before imitating motor actions. In teaching, keep in mind that you should make sure to teach multiple actions as well as novel actions with the same material.  Avoid always targeting the “intended action” as a target (e.g. putting peg into a pegboard) as it is difficult to determine if the child is doing a task completion or a motor imitation.  The point of imitation training is to have the child do what you do, not to do something because he or she has learned to manipulate the objects in a particular way. Also, for children with very early to no play skills, imitation using toy sets can be a way to develop play skills.  However, for students with strong independent play, using preferred play sets can actually lead to problematic behavior (they may use the materials in a stereotyped fashion or have difficulty giving up the materials at the end of the trial.)  For these students, it may be better to choose more neutral materials.

**Motor Imitation Targets and Skill Tracking Sheets (Developed by Susan Brown, OT:**

**ONE PART BODY MOVEMENTS (3 – 3.5 YEARS)**

**Proximal unilateral arm**

* one hand touches top of head
* one hand touches belly
* one hand (open with fingers straight) touch nose
* one hand on table palm down and hold
* one hand(open with fingers straight and pointing to side) cover mouth
* one hand touches knee

**Distal unilateral arm / leg**

* one arm straight up overhead, palm forward
* one arm straight out to side, palm down
* one arm straight out in front, palm down
* place one foot forward on ground (note if done sitting or standing)
* place one foot backward on ground (note if done sitting or standing)

**Distal unilateral arm / leg with movement**

* one arm straight out to side, make arm circle
* wave with one hand moving side to side
* wave with hand moving up/down
* stomp one foot up and down
* wiggle one foot off ground
* kick with one foot
* lift foot/point toes up and down

**IDENTIFY BODY PLANES (3.5 – 5 YEARS)**

* e.g. touch your side, touch your back

**BODY MOVEMENTS WITH INTEGRATION OF BOTH SIDES OF THE BODY (4-4.5 YEARS)**

**Proximal symmetrical bilateral arms**

* hands on head
* hands to cheeks
* hands on shoulder
* hands on belly
* hands on waist
* hands on knees
* touch toes with two hands
* palms flat on table (hold in position)
* two hands on table with palms up (hold in position)

**Proximal symmetrical bilateral arms with movement**

* clap hands
* tap table (repetitive) with palms of two hands
* rub hands with fingers straight, palms together
* washing hands movement (top and bottom of hands)

**Distal symmetrical bilateral arms / legs**

* arms up straight over head, palms forward
* arms overhead with palms together
* arms straight out to sides, palms down
* arms straight out in front, palms down
* arms straight out in front, palms up
* arms out to back
* place feet together (note if done sitting or standing)
* spread feet apart on ground while seated

**Distal symmetrical bilateral arms / legs with movement**

* arms straight out to side and move up and down
* arms straight out to side and make circles
* clapping hands together with arms straight overhead
* two arms rolling (e.g. wheels on the bus)
* stomp both feet together while seated
* alternate feet for marching (note if done in sitting or standing)
* jumping on two feet

**PLACE BODY IN SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS TO OBJECT (4.5 – 5 YEARS)**

* e.g. stand with your back in front of the wall, stand with your side against the wall

**BODY MOVEMENT REQUIRING FINER COORDINATION OF BODY PARTS (5 – 5.5 YEARS)**

* e.g. asymmetrical, crossing body midline, multiple planes

**Proximal bilateral arms / legs with multiple planes or asymmetry**

* cross hands to place on alternate cheeks
* cross arms in front of body with hands grasping alternate elbows (e.g. “hug”)
* cross arms to place hands on alternate thighs
* two hands on table, one palm down and one palm up
* arms at side, elbows bent, palms of two hands together (fingers straight) in front of body
* bent arms, elbows at waist, arms out in front, palms up
* bent arms, elbows at waist, arms out in front, palms down
* cross feet on ground while seated
* cross legs while standing

**Distal bilateral arms / legs with multiple planes or asymmetry**

* one arm up straight over head, palm forward and other arm straight out to side palm down
* one arm down at side and other arm straight out to side palm down
* one arm straight over head, palm forward and other arm down at side
* rms out to side with elbows bent, one hand pointing up, one hand pointing down
* one arm straight out to side, other arm out to side with elbow fully bent so hand is pointing toward body
* in sitting, legs out straight with one toe pointing up, one toe pointing down
* in sitting, one foot on floor, other foot propped up on alternate knee

**BODY MOVEMENT REQUIRING COMPLEX VISUAL PERCEPTION AND FINE MOTOR CONTROL (5.5 – 6 YEARS)**

* e.g.fine motor hand movements and signing

**Unilateral hand positions**

* thumb up with other fingers fisted
* index finger up with other fingers fisted (#1)
* index and third fingers up in “v”, other fingers fisted (peace sign)
* index finger closed on thumb (pincer grasp)
* index and thumb make “L”, other fingers fisted
* index and middle finger crossed, other fingers fisted
* palm facing away from body, thumb against hand and fingers straight
* palm facing up, thumb against hand, fingers curved toward ceiling (like bowl)
* palm facing body, thumb away from palm, finger and thumb curled (like holding cylinder)

**Bilateral hand positions**

* two palms together, fingers interlocked
* two palms pointing out, thumb tips together, other fingers pointing straight up in air
* tips of index fingers touching, other fingers fisted
* index finger of one hand (other fingers fisted) touching back of other hand
* index fingers clasped together, one facing up, one facing down, other fingers fisted (e.g. friend sign)

**Unilateral or Bilateral hand positions with movement**

* index finger draws line on table (move toward body e.g. vertical line)
* index finger draws line across table (e.g. horizontal line)
* index finger draws circle on table
* index finger points to cheek and rotates (e.g. candy sign)
* fisted hand tapping chin (e.g. drink sign)
* hands side by side together with palms facing out, pull apart (e.g. all done sign)
* bent arms, elbows at waist, arms out in front, fists apart and palms turn up and down

**Student Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Skills Tracking Sheet**

**Skill: One Part Body Movements** (#1-6 proximal unilateral arm, # 7-11 distal unilateral arm/leg, # 12-17 distal unilateral arm/leg with movement)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Target** | **Date Introduced** | **Date Mastered** |
| **1** | One hand touches top of head |  |  |
| **2** | One hand touches belly |  |  |
| **3** | One hand (open with fingers straight) touches nose |  |  |
| **4** | One hand on table palm down and hold |  |  |
| **5** | One hand (open with fingers straight and pointing to side) covers mouth |  |  |
| **6** | One hand touches knee |  |  |
| **7** | One arm straight up overhead, palm forward |  |  |
| **8** | One arm straight out to side, palm down |  |  |
| **9** | One arm straight out in front, palm down |  |  |
| **10** | Place one foot forward on ground (note if done sitting or standing) |  |  |
| **11** | Place one foot backward on ground (note if done sitting or standing) |  |  |
| **12** | One arm straight out to side, make arm circle |  |  |
| **13** | Wave with one hand moving side to side |  |  |
| **14** | Wave with hand moving up/down |  |  |
| **15** | Stomp one foot up and down |  |  |
| **16** | Wiggle one foot off ground |  |  |
| **17** | Kick with one foot |  |  |
| **18** | Lift foot / point toes up and down |  |  |
| **19** |  |  |  |
| **20** |  |  |  |
| **21** |  |  |  |
| **22** |  |  |  |
| **23** |  |  |  |
| **24** |  |  |  |
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**Student Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Skills Tracking Sheet**

**Skill: Body Movements with Integration of Both Sides of the Body** (#1-9 proximal symmetrical bilateral arm, # 10-13 proximal symmetrical bilateral arms with movement, # 14-21 distal symmetrical bilateral arms/legs, # 22-28 distal symmetrical bilateral arms/legs with movement)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Target** | **Date Introduced** | **Date Mastered** |
| **1** | Hands on head |  |  |
| **2** | Hands to cheeks |  |  |
| **3** | Hands on shoulder |  |  |
| **4** | Hands on belly |  |  |
| **5** | Hands on waist |  |  |
| **6** | Hands on knees |  |  |
| **7** | Touch toes with two hands |  |  |
| **8** | Palms flat on table (hold in position) |  |  |
| **9** | Two hands on table with palms up (hold in position) |  |  |
| **10** | Clap hands |  |  |
| **11** | Tap table (repetitive) with palms of two hands |  |  |
| **12** | Rub hands with fingers straight, palms together |  |  |
| **13** | Washing hands movement (top and bottom of hands) |  |  |
| **14** | Arms up straight over head |  |  |
| **15** | Arms overhead with palms together |  |  |
| **16** | Arms straight out to sides, palms down |  |  |
| **17** | Arms straight out in front, palms down |  |  |
| **18** | Arms straight out in front, palms up |  |  |
| **19** | Arms out to back |  |  |
| **20** | Place feet together (note if done sitting or standing) |  |  |
| **21** | Spread feet apart on ground while seated |  |  |
| **22** | Arms straight out to side and move up and down |  |  |
| **23** | Arms straight out to side and make circles |  |  |
| **24** | Clapping hands together with arms straight overhead |  |  |
| **25** | Two arms rolling (eg. wheels on the bus) |  |  |

**Student Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Skills Tracking Sheet**

**Skill: Body Movements with Integration of Both Sides of the Body** (#1-9 proximal symmetrical bilateral arm, # 10-13 proximal symmetrical bilateral arms with movement, # 14-22 distal symmetrical bilateral arms/legs, # 23-28 distal symmetrical bilateral arms/legs with movement)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Target** | **Date Introduced** | **Date Mastered** |
| **26** | Stomp both feet together while seated |  |  |
| **27** | Alternate feet for marching (note if done in sitting or standing) |  |  |
| **28** | Jumping on two feet |  |  |
| **29** |  |  |  |
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**Student Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Skills Tracking Sheet**

**Skill: Body Movements Requiring Finer Coordination of Body Parts** (#1-9 proximal bilateral arms / legs with multiple planes or asymmetry, # 10-16 distal bilateral arms / legs with multiple planes or asymmetry)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Target** | **Date Introduced** | **Date Mastered** |
| **1** | Cross hands to place on alternate cheeks |  |  |
| **2** | Cross arms in front of body with hands grasping alternate elbows (eg. “hug”) |  |  |
| **3** | Cross arms to place hands on alternate thighs |  |  |
| **4** | Two hands on table, one palm down and one palm up |  |  |
| **5** | Arms at side, elbows bent, palms of two hands together (fingers straight) in front of body |  |  |
| **6** | Bent arms, elbows at waist, arms out in front, palms up |  |  |
| **7** | Bent arms, elbows at waist, arms out in front, palms down |  |  |
| **8** | Cross feet on ground while seated |  |  |
| **9** | Cross legs while standing |  |  |
| **10** | One arm up straight over head, palm forward and other arm straight out to side palm down |  |  |
| **11** | One arm down at side and other arm straight out to side palm down |  |  |
| **12** | One arm straight over head, palm forward and other arm down at side |  |  |
| **13** | Arms out to side with elbows bent, one hand pointing up, one hand pointing down |  |  |
| **14** | One arm straight out to side, other arm out to side with elbow fully bent so hand is pointing toward body |  |  |
| **15** | In sitting, legs out straight with one toe pointing up, one toe pointing down |  |  |
| **16** | In sitting, one foot on floor, other foot propped up on alternate knee |  |  |
| **17** |  |  |  |
| **18** |  |  |  |
| **19** |  |  |  |
| **20** |  |  |  |
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**Student Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Skills Tracking Sheet**

**Skill: Body Movement Requiring Complex Visual Perception and Fine Motor Control** (#1-9 unilateral hand positions, # 10-14 bilateral hand positions, # 15-21 unilateral or bilateral hand positions with movement)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Target** | **Date Introduced** | **Date Mastered** |
| **1** | Thumb up with other fingers fisted |  |  |
| **2** | Index finger up with other fingers fisted (#1) |  |  |
| **3** | Index and third fingers up in “v”, other fingers fisted (peace sign) |  |  |
| **4** | Index finger closed on thumb (pincer grasp) |  |  |
| **5** | Index and thumb make “L”, other fingers fisted |  |  |
| **6** | Index and middle finger crossed, other fingers fisted |  |  |
| **7** | Palm facing away from body, thumb against hand and fingers straight |  |  |
| **8** | Palm facing up, thumb against hand, fingers curved toward ceiling (like bowl) |  |  |
| **9** | Palm facing body, thumb away from palm, finger and thumb curled (like holding cylinder) |  |  |
| **10** | Two palms together, fingers interlocked |  |  |
| **11** | Two palms pointing out, thumb tips together, other fingers pointing straight up in air |  |  |
| **12** | Tips of index fingers touching other fingers fisted |  |  |
| **13** | Index finger of one hand (other fingers fisted) touching back of other hand |  |  |
| **14** | Index fingers clasped together, one facing up, one facing down, other fingers fisted (eg. friend sign) |  |  |
| **15** | Index finger draws line on table (move toward body eg. vertical line) |  |  |
| **16** | Index finger draws line across table (eg. horizontal line) |  |  |
| **17** | Index finger draws circle on table |  |  |
| **18** | Index finger points to cheek and rotates (eg. candy sign) |  |  |
| **19** | Fisted hand tapping chin (eg. drink sign) |  |  |
| **20** | Hands side by side together with palms facing out, pull apart (eg. all done sign) |  |  |
| **21** | Bent arms, elbows at waist, arms out in front, fists apart and palms turn up and down |  |  |
| **22** |  |  |  |
| **23** |  |  |  |
| **24** |  |  |  |
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