



INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Things to remember:

- It is important to be aware of the physical characteristics related with some disabilities (particularly Down Syndrome). These could include muscle limitations, joint issues, breathing difficulties and poor balance hence the importance of seeking professional advice.
- Children with ID often respond well to routine and structure. Try to follow a consistent routine of engaging in exercise (E.g. swimming every Tuesday after school).
- Utilise communication methods that work best with your child (E.g. routine boards, visuals, verbal encouragement). School teachers can also provide insightful communication strategies to engage 'unwilling' participants.
- Give your child plenty of time to adapt and accept the new changes asked. Provide a 'non-food' reward for positive engagement.
- Many children with ID (particularly ASD) experience hypersensitivities. Ensure these needs are met as best as possible. E.g. Try to use equipment with different textures (spikey balls, soft mats etc.)

References:

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Types of exercise recommended:

- Cardiovascular exercise and strength/resistance training (under supervision) every day for a total of 60 minutes (remember this can be broken up across the day).
- Start at 5-10 minutes of continuous activity 1-2 days a week. Slowly increase the duration of activity to 10-30 minutes 3-4 days a week. You can later increase it to 15-60 minutes for 5-7 days a week.
- Swimming and water play work well for children with large sensory needs.
- Focus on encouraging fundamental movement skills – running, catching, kicking, leaping, throwing, kicking, jumping. Whilst this may seem like big steps for some, break each skill into little parts and focus on exaggerating movements.

