

## LEARNING HOW TO JUMP

Jumping is a fun activity for children to learn and helps to develop their strength, balance and coordination skills. Most children learn to jump on their own by around the age of 3 years although this can vary from child to child. Here are ways you can help teach your child in learning how to jump on their own:

### Squats:

- Show or help your child to squat down then stand up quickly. This will help strengthen the muscles needed for jumping. You can pretend to be a frog or rocket ship getting ready to blast off!

### Bouncing:

- Show or help your child to bend their legs in order to move up and down. You can try this on a springy surface such as a cushion or mattress on the floor. They can hold onto your hands from in front while you mimic the motion for them.

### Heel Raises:

- Show or help your child to rise up onto their toes. This will help strengthen their calf muscles, which is needed to help propel them off the floor in order to jump. Have them hold on for support if needed and encourage them to do this quickly to prepare them for jumping.

### Supported Jumping:

- Have your child hold onto your hands or a support surface and jump taking off/landing on both feet. Avoid pulling up on their arms, allowing them to control the movement themselves. Once your child is able to jump with 2 hands held, progress to 1 hand then hands free.

### Jumping Off a Step:

- Jumping off a low step is sometimes easier than jumping with both feet off the ground. Hold your child's hands from in front and model for them how to bend their legs and shift their weight forward in order to jump off the step.

### Jumping Forward:

- Try using a taped line, hoola hoops or stickers on the floor to cue your child to jump over them. As your child improves, move the target further away or have them jump over a rope raised slightly off the floor.

### Jumping in the Pool:

- The buoyancy of the water will help your child learn to propel themselves in order to experience clearance off the ground. Try practicing in water that is waist deep and make sure to provide appropriate supervision at all times.

### Jumping Games:

- Fun games for your child to practice once they have learned to jump -
  - Jump to pop bubbles
  - Jump like various animals: kangaroo, frog, bunny
  - Jump to action songs (ie: sleeping bunnies, pop goes the weasel)
  - Jump sideways and backwards
  - Jump with feet together then apart
  - Jump in/out of hoola hoops on the ground
  - Play a game of hopscotch

Once your child has learned to jump on 2 feet, they can be progressed to learning how to hop on 1 leg and skip rope. If you are concerned that your child is not meeting their developmental milestones, speak to your child's health care provider.