

## Activity Guide #9 – Balancing

Book: *Silly Sally* by Audrey Wood

### Introduction

A child's mind and body develop together in an interrelated way. From the time they are born, children use their bodies to learn, making physical development vitally important to all areas of development and learning.

However, today there are a number of challenges to supporting a child's physical development, including their gross motor skills. Children have easy access to screens (e.g., television, cell phones, tablets) and many live in areas where there may not be space and/or safe opportunities for them to engage in physical activities. Therefore it is important that children enrolled in child care programs have daily opportunities to develop their gross motor skills.

Although gross motor skills will largely develop on their own, there are ways in which early childhood professionals can encourage these skills to help children play confidently, engage in fun physical activities, and develop a strong foundation for a healthy, active lifestyle that carries into adulthood. This includes both opportunities for children's free exploration and practice of balancing skills and through planned experiences that are featured in the guides included in the supplemental curriculum, **B.A.M.M.M.!**

Begin by providing time each day for outside play, weather permitting. Make sure there is sufficient indoor and outdoor space for children to safely practice and refine their balancing skills.

In this **B.A.M.M.M.!** guide, children are introduced to balancing when they hear the story, *Silly Sally*, followed by activities that involve them in teacher-guided balancing activities that support the **Physical Development and Health Domain**, plus additional activities that support the **Language Development** and **Emergent Literacy Domain** as well as other Domains.

**Teacher Note:** *Information for this introduction was adapted from the introduction to the **Physical Development and Health Domain** in the Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 months (April 2016). The developers of **B.A.M.M.M.!** recommend that everyone using these guides review the entire introduction.*

### Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 Months

**Domain: Physical Development and Health**  
**Domain Component: Gross Motor**

#### Learning Goals (with Strands and Skill or Indicators)

##### PH1.2 Shows Stability and Balance (*core stability*)

- Shows increasing ability to maintain balance while moving from one position to another, changing directions, or stopping abruptly ("freezes" while running)

## Materials to Collect and Make

- ✓ Book: *Silly Sally* by Audrey Wood
- ✓ Develop felt or magnetic storytelling figures as a vehicle for presenting the story to children. See Attachment: [Silly Sally](#)
- ✓ Carpet squares, one per child
- ✓ Bean bags
- ✓ Baskets
- ✓ Bean Bag Activities CD
- ✓ Balance beam

## Introduce the Activity

### Learning Goals:

**LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (vocabulary and language comprehension)**

**EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (engagement in literacy experiences)**

### Directions:

- Sing "If You're Happy and You Know It" – A silly version

*If you're happy and you know it, say boo hoo.*

*(Rub eyes, pretend to cry)*

*If you're happy and you know it, say boo hoo.*

*(Rub eyes, pretend to cry)*

*If you're happy and you know it,*

*Then your face will surely show it. (Sad face)*

*If you're happy and you know it, say boo hoo.*

*(Rub eyes, pretend to cry)*

*If you're sad and you know it, smile like this. (Big smile)*

*If you're sad and you know it smile like this. (Big smile)*

*If you're sad and you know it,*

*Then your face will surely show it. (Happy face)*

*If you're sad and you know it, smile like this. (Big smile)*

Ask children if they noticed anything different about the song? What did they notice? Explain that you were singing the song in a silly way.

- Invite children to join you in singing "If You're Happy and You Know It", the silly version.

## Present the Story

### Learning Goals:

**LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language)** (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

**EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences** (*engagement in literacy experiences, variety of interests*)

**EL1.2 Engages in read-alouds and conversations about books and stories** (*story comprehension*)

**EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print** (*book knowledge*)

### Directions:

- Prepare to read the book, *Silly Sally*.
- Show the cover, give title and author. (Explain that author is person who writes the words.)
- Ask children what they think the word "silly" means.
- Ask, "Why do you think Sally is called silly? What are some silly things you think Sally will do?" Accept all answers. Say, "Let's read and find out if you were right."
- Read book with children sitting so all can see the pictures.
- Review the book by showing pictures and inviting children's comments. Call attention to all of the things Sally does "backward": walking, dancing, leaping, singing and sleeping.

### Extension:

- Read the book a second time.
- Follow up by allowing children to fill in the rhyming words. For example, on the first page, read "Silly Sally went to town, walking backwards upside \_\_\_\_\_ (down)."
- Continue this process through the end of the story.

### Additional Learning Goal:

**EL2.1 Notices and manipulates the sounds of language** (*rhyme*)

**Teacher Note:** *This process of pausing and allowing children to fill in the missing word is called the cloze technique.*

## Extend the Story

### Learning Goals:

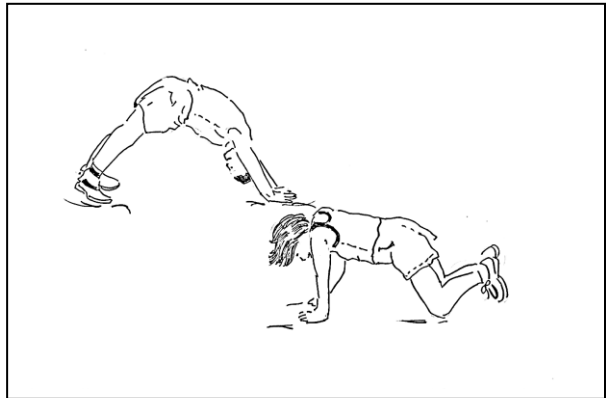
**PH1.2 Shows stability and balance** (*core stability*)

**LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language)** (*vocabulary and language comprehension, follows directions*)

### Directions:

- Ask children, two at a time, to get a carpet square and put it on the floor, leaving space between them. Help as needed.
- Explain to children that they will be balancing on different parts of their bodies. Explain that balancing means "not falling over."
- Involve the children in balancing different body parts with wide bases of support.
  - "Can you balance on your hands and your feet at the same time?"
  - "Can you balance on two hands, two feet and two knees at the same time?"
  - "Can you balance on your head, hands and feet at the same time?"
  - "Can you balance on your knees and your elbows at the same time?"
- Observe and assist children who are having a difficult time balancing on body parts.
- Allow children to practice balancing.

**Teacher Safety Note:** *Avoid including headstands in your movement program for three and four year old children. These children do not have enough strength and balance to perform a headstand.*



## Conclude the Session

### Learning Goals:

**LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language)** (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

**EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences** (*engagement in literacy experiences*)

**EL2.1 Notices and manipulates the sounds of language** (*rhyme*)

### Directions:

- Lead children in a finger play. Suit actions to words.

*I've been so busy balancing,  
Now I'm tired as I can be.  
I'll cross my legs,  
I'll close my eyes  
So I can't see.*

*I will not move my body.  
I'll be like Raggedy Ann.  
My head won't move,  
My arms won't move.  
I'll just be still  
Because I can.*

## Try these additional activities

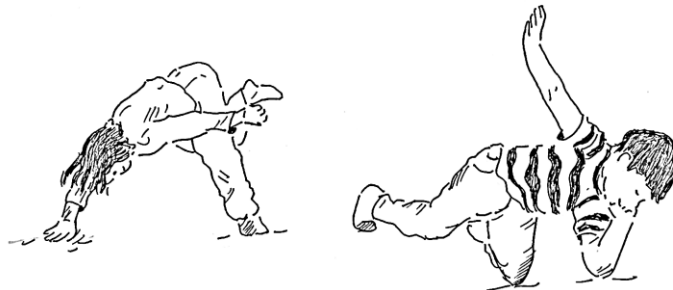
### Learning Goals:

**PH1.2 Shows stability and balance** (*core stability*)

**LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language)** (*vocabulary and language comprehension, follows directions*)

### More Balancing

- Reread the book, *Silly Sally* by Audrey Wood.
- Review the book by looking at pictures and discussing how each of the characters in the book is balancing.
- Explain to children that they are going to be balancing on different parts of their bodies.
- Observe children as they balance on wide bases to know when they are ready for these balancing activities on narrow bases.
- Involve children in balancing body parts on narrow bases.
  - “Can you balance on your head and feet at the same time?”
  - “Can you balance on one foot and one hand at the same time?”
  - “Show me that you can you can balance on your head and one foot at the same time.”
  - “Can you balance on one knee and one elbow at the same time?”
  - “Show me that you can balance on your bottom without letting any other part of your body touch the floor.”



**Teacher Safety Note:** Avoid including headstands in your movement program for three and four year olds. These children do not have enough strength and balance to perform a handstand.

## Walking on a Balance Beam

- Involve the children in walking on a low balance beam.
- Allow only one child at a time to walk on the beam.
- Have children step up on one end of the balance beam.
- Tell children *“Walk across the balance beam just like you would walk across the floor.”* Say, *“Step with one foot, now step with the other foot.”* Say, *“Hold your arms straight out to your side.”*
- Hold the hand of a child who may need this support.
- Allow children many opportunities to practice walking across the board until they have gained the skills and confidence to move to a higher board.
- Be aware that children will vary in their development of this skill.
- Vary the difficulty of the skill according to the development of the children. Some may be able to walk sideways or backward on the beam.

**Teacher note:** *Modify this activity for children who may be having difficulty balancing on a beam. For example, have them balance on a taped line on the floor or on a chalk line on the sidewalk outdoors.*



### Balancing with Bean Bags

- Prepare for this activity by having the following available:
  - ✓ Bean Bag Activities CD, song “How Many Ways?”
  - ✓ CD player
  - ✓ one bean bag per child
- Ask children to hold hands, make a circle and drop hands.
- Have two children at a time get a bean bag from the container and return to their spot.
- Allow children to experiment with holding the bean bags in different positions such as in one hand, then the other, on their shoulder and on their head.
- Stand in the center of the circle with a bean bag and participate with the children.
- Explain that the bean bag song tells them many different things to do with the bean bag.  
*“Listen carefully and do what the song tells you.”*

### Bean Bag Parade

- Prepare for this activity by having the following available
  - ✓ one bean bag for each child
  - ✓ Bean Bag Activities CD, song “Bean Bag Parade”
  - ✓ CD player
- Help children form a line for marching. Give each child a bean bag.
- Play “Bean Bag Parade”
- Begin by having children hold the bean bag on their head while marching.
- Increase the difficulty as children become more skilled at balancing bean bags. For example, see if children can stand in place without moving as they balance the bean bag on their head. Some children may be able to balance the bean bag on their head while marching.

**Teacher Note:** *Find a way for each child to be successful.*



### Balancing Baskets

- Provide baskets for children to try and balance on their heads.
- Provide safe objects such as bean bags or rolled up socks for children to place in the baskets.
- Look for pictures of people balancing baskets on their heads. Show pictures to the children and discuss with them. Use the word “balance.”



### Tightrope Walker

Locate or draw a picture of a tightrope walker in a circus and show it as you and the children say the following finger play:

While the band is playing, Back and forth I go. High above the people, Sitting far below.	While the crowd is cheering, I sway from side to side. Now my act is over, Down the pole I slide.
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**Teacher Note:** *The picture can also be used to illustrate a chart to show as children are saying the finger play.*

### Additional Books

- ❑ *Harold's Circus* by Crockett Johnson
- ❑ *Mirette on the High Wire* by Emily Arnold McCully



## Resources

- ✓ Balance beams can be ordered from equipment catalogs or from school supply companies.
- ✓ Bean Bag Activities CD can be ordered from school supply companies.

### Teacher Notes:

- Children need to hear the same story read to them several times.
- Children also need frequent opportunities to repeat and practice movement activities.
- Plan to reread the book, *Silly Sally* by Audrey Wood, and include a variety of the balancing activities.
- It is important that stories and activities be repeated with children at different times throughout the year.