

FLAGHOUSE Adapted Activity Guide

IT ROCKS! For Children with Disabilities

Item #11472

Introduction

IT ROCKS!™ is a series of developmental lead-up activities designed to provide children with limited mobility the opportunity to participate in traditional traversing and climbing activities without the high cost, or required dedicated space, of a permanent climbing wall.

IT ROCKS! promotes:

- lateral movement
- visual tracking
- flexibility
- balance
- coordination
- crossing midline
- muscular endurance
- eye-hand/eye-foot coordination
- spatial awareness, and
- stability

The special design of the IT ROCKS! activity (colorful wall and floor spots) enables children of all ages and abilities to participate in group and individual challenges. More importantly, the therapist or teacher can quickly modify the IT ROCKS! game area to increase or decrease the activity challenge to meet the ability of each participant. Whether used during individual sessions or during group play, IT ROCKS! affords individual growth on specific motor objectives (e.g., increase in upper body mobility). In addition, the activity offers children the opportunity to visually plan, communicate, team build, and engage in group cognitive strategies with their peers who are typically developing.

The therapist or teacher can make slight modifications as outlined in this guide to create IT ROCKS! activities that meet the needs of all students, while making task modifications (color identification, adding words, numbers, or shapes) that encourage children with disabilities to be successful.

Purpose & Educational Applications

IT ROCKS! provides an opportunity for students, including children with physical limitations, who are not able to hold their own body weight vertically off of the ground while moving in a lateral motion, to participate in a fun and exciting form of physical activity. In addition, IT ROCKS! challenges children of all abilities toward meeting individual fitness and movement goals while fostering group cohesion and cooperation.

IT ROCKS! can be used by physical therapists, occupational therapists, adapted physical educators, classroom teachers, special education teachers, and recreation specialists to engage the student(s) in an active learning situation that stimulates visual planning, reaching, spatial awareness, cognitive thinking, and coordination of body movements to increase moving and learning. The action-based learning that occurs with IT ROCKS! supports the framework that the brain uses to process, sequence, store, and retrieve similar patterns needed for academic concepts.

When the child is working on cross lateralization, static/dynamic balance, coordination, spatial awareness, directionality, and visual accuracy, the vestibular system in the brain is stimulated, thereby improving the student's ability to complete cognitive activities such as formulating words, concepts, communicating with peers, or visually attending to a specific object. The movement patterns reinforced through IT ROCKS! increase the brain's ability to process and encode information, making learning meaningful and, most of all, fun.

How Can I Use This Product With My Kids?

IT ROCKS! can be used in a variety of settings. Since it doesn't require dedicated wall space, it can be set up in a classroom, the gym, a hallway, cafeteria, etc. Set up takes approximately ten minutes. The activities can be used in station format, or as part of your daily "brain" warm-up. If able, students must always keep at least one hand on the IT ROCKS! wall. In addition, only one player per wall or floor spot is recommended. You can also use the reproducible worksheet to keep individual performance records.

Start simple and allow your students to explore the game.

Begin by letting the students move across the wall freely (e.g., ask them to choose only one or two colors to keep the patterns simple). Encourage students to problem-solve new and innovative ways to move their bodies as they reach and stretch farther with each new game. This will increase their success and reinforce the type of movements (cross lateralization, spatial awareness, etc.) that you want the children to work on.

Consider putting IT ROCKS! across folded bleachers, in a corner, on a stage front, or across wall mats commonly found in gyms.

Anywhere it is safe and appropriate for a child to move and learn, the IT ROCKS! game can be set up and used. Keep IT ROCKS! permanently on a wall or corner in your classroom and allow children to "play" during free time.

Set Up

IT ROCKS! includes:

- 40 5" Floor Spots (10 each in blue, red, green, and yellow)
- 24 5" Wall Spots (6 each in blue, red, green, and yellow)
- 24 2" Wall Spots (6 each in blue, red, green, and yellow)
- 96 Adhesive-backed Wall Fasteners
- 38 Movement Cards
- 1 Storage Bag

- Find a combined floor and wall space (see diagram), approximately 18'-20' in length and 4' in height.
- At a maximum height of 4' from the floor, secure the wall spots approximately every 3' using a random pattern (see diagram). For younger children, and to make the traversing aspect of the game easier, consider placing more wall spots 3'-4' off the ground.
- At a maximum distance of 4'-5' from the wall, randomly place the non-slip poly-vinyl floor spots approximately every 2'.
- Check the pattern to make sure that there is adequate coverage of all four colors (blue, red, green, and yellow).
- Be sure that all of the wall/floor spots can be reached before starting the activity.

Addressing the Needs of Children With Orthopedic Disabilities

When making modifications to address the individual needs of children with disabilities, begin by assessing their independent and assisted-movement capability.

- For example, some children will require the use of a prone stander or a therapist's assistance. An alternative would be to focus on just one aspect of the IT ROCKS! activity (e.g., upper body mobility and visual targeting), rather than asking the child to control both his/her hands and feet.

- Children who use walkers or similar types of mobility aids may experience great difficulty in using their hands on the wall. An alternative would be to have these players focus on moving and positioning their feet on the appropriate floor spot.

- For children who use wheelchairs, positioning is essential to their success. An alternative would be to concentrate on reaching and cross-lateralization movements.

In all cases, you can adjust the wall and floor spots so that they are reachable and that the activity has been sufficiently modified to ensure success.

Activities

The following sample activities are listed from simple to more complex. For each activity, diamonds ♦ are used to indicate the degree of difficulty. All activities can be conducted individually or in small groups.

Activity: GET READY TO ROCK!

Difficulty: ♦♦♦♦♦

Purpose: To promote eye/hand coordination, color identification, visual planning, balance, and stability. This warm up activity introduces students to the wall and allows them to explore new ways to move and use their bodies.

Materials: Minimum 10' of wall/floor spots.

Procedure: Let students choose two colors. Instruct the student to move from one end of the wall to the other, keeping at least one hand on the wall at all times (provide example as needed).

Observations:

- Is the student able to select two colors?
- Is the student able to coordinate his/her hands and feet while moving laterally?
- Is the student able to visually plan for the next move?
- Is the student able to manage his/her body while moving?
- How far is the student able to reach and step comfortably?

Strategies to REDUCE difficulty:

- Use only one color at a time
- Move only in one direction
- Move the floor spots closer to the wall
- Decrease the distance between the spots
- Use a smaller playing surface

Strategies to INCREASE difficulty:

- Increase the amount of colors used
- Encourage movement in both directions
- Move floor spots farther from the wall and lower hand targets
- Increase the distance between spots
- Call out right- or left-hand/foot combinations

Activity Name: IT ROCKS! BIG 'N' LITTLE!

Difficulty: ♦♦♦♦♦

Purpose: To promote size, left/right, and color discrimination.

Materials: Minimum 10' of wall/floor spots.

Procedure: Instruct students to "find" a big or little spot, keeping at least one hand on the wall at all times. Tell them to put their hands on the "big" or the "little" target. Next, ask students to put their hand on a "big red" or a "little yellow". Continue to call out "big/little" colors. Ask them if they can find the same colors/sizes with their feet.

Observations:

- Is the student able to distinguish between the "big" and "little" spots?
- Is the student able to coordinate his/her hands and feet while moving laterally?

- Is the student able to visually plan to find "big" or "little" target?
- Is the student able to manage his/her body while moving?
- Is the student able to match colors using his/her hands and feet?

Strategies to REDUCE difficulty:

- Use only one or two colors at a time on the wall
- Use only large or small spots
- Move the floor spots closer to the wall
- Decrease the distance between wall/floor spots
- Decrease the size of the playing surface

Strategies to INCREASE difficulty:

- Increase the amount of colors used
- Encourage movement in both directions
- Move floor spots farther from the wall and lower hand targets
- Increase the distance between spots
- Increase the frequency for calling out "big" or "little" to speed up the game.

Activity Name: IT ROCKS! ONE WAY

Difficulty: ♦♦♦♦♦

Purpose: To promote eye/hand coordination, color identification, strength and endurance, visual planning, motor planning, balance, and flexibility. This activity challenges students to move across the wall using the least amount of touches possible.

Materials: Wall/floor spot set up; activity sheet to collect performance data.

Procedure: Allow the student to choose two or more colors. Be sure to circle the selected colors on the data sheet (R-Y-B-G). Instruct the student to move from one end of the wall to the other, counting all hand and foot touches sequentially. After the student gets to the end of the wall, total the number of touches it took to move from one side of the wall to the other (e.g., 21 total touches). Repeat the task and see if the student can improve his/her score on each subsequent pass. Note: The student must keep at least one hand on the wall at all times.

Observations:

- Is the student able to follow the colors selected?
- Is the student able to coordinate his/her hands and feet while moving laterally?
- Is the student able to visually plan for the next move?
- Is the student able to keep accurate count while moving?

Strategies to REDUCE difficulty:

- Count each move for the student
- Use more than two colors
- Move the floor spots closer to the wall
- Decrease the distance between spots
- Decrease the size of the playing surface

Strategies to INCREASE difficulty:

- Encourage movement in both directions
- Move the floor spots farther from the wall and lower hand targets
- Increase the distance between spots
- Challenge the student to improve his/her score by reaching or stepping farther

Activity Name: IT ROCKS! CRISS-CROSSED!

Difficulty: ♦♦♦♦♦

Purpose: To promote group cooperation, team communication, eye/hand coordination, color identification, visual planning, strength and flexibility, balance, and stability.

Materials: Minimum 18'-20' of wall/floor spots; game cards may be added to increase the complexity of the activity; one 15'-20' length of rope per team may be added to link students together to increase difficulty (see

TRANGO TRIO or TEAM TRAVERSE for more detailed information).
 Procedure: At least 6 students are needed. Divide the students equally into two teams and have them stand in line at either end (Side A or Side B) of the IT ROCKS! wall. Each team must choose two colors. Do not disclose the colors that the teams have selected before the activity begins. Instruct the students that their goal is to move their team from Side A to the Side B while, at the same time, the other team is trying to move their team in the opposite direction from Side B to Side A using their chosen colors. On the teacher's command, both teams begin moving across the IT ROCKS! wall. As one player begins, the next player in line may go as long as there is room on the wall/floor. Each player must watch and communicate with those closest to them, and must keep at least one hand on the wall at all times. It is possible that both teams have picked one or both of the same colors. Remember, only one player per color wall or floor spot is allowed per move. Players are not allowed to "double up" on a single spot. If a spot is not available, or the student "lets go" of the wall (removes both hands from the wall), that player has fallen and must return to his/her original starting point and begin again. Players are not allowed to push anyone off a spot. If they do, they must return to their own starting point. The first team to complete the task can celebrate ITS achievement!

Observations:

- Are the students able to decide on two colors as a team?
- Are the students able to coordinate their hands and feet while moving laterally?
- Are the students able to observe the colors of the opposing team?
- Are the students able to manage their own bodies while moving?
- Are the students communicating during the activity?
- Are the students able to discriminate right from left?

Strategies to REDUCE difficulty:

- Do not use game cards to indicate direction and color
- Make sure that both teams are not using the same color
- Move the floor spots closer to the wall
- Decrease the distance between spots
- Do not create a "must win" or "race" environment
- Use a spotter or helper to aid one or more "climbers"

Strategies to INCREASE difficulty:

- Introduce game cards and call out direction and color (e.g., Right Red)
- Encourage moving quickly across the wall
- Move floor spots farther from the wall and lower hand targets
- Increase the cadence in which the cards are called

Activity Name: IT ROCKS! TRANGO TRIO

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆◇

Purpose: To promote team cooperation and communication, eye/hand coordination, color identification, visual planning, strength, flexibility, balance, and stability. At least three players per team are connected by a rope and must move from one side of the wall to the other.

Materials: Minimum 18'-20' of wall/floor spots; 2 climbing-style ropes, each approximately 15'L-20'L. 3 to 5 carabiners per rope, or as many carabiners as players per team.

Procedure: At least 6 students are needed to participate. The maximum number of players is 10. Divide students equally into two teams and have them stand in line at either end (Side A or Side B) of the IT ROCKS! wall. Each team must choose two colors. Using the same team set-up procedures as for IT ROCKS! CRISS-CROSSED, give each team a length of rope (approximately 15'L-20'L) and one carabiner per player. Tie a loop at each end of the rope (a bowline or overhand loop knot). Clip one carabiner into each loop. One player will be the "climbing leader" and they will be the first to start across the wall. The "tag climber" will be the last climber to move across the wall. Tie a loop and add a carabiner for the remaining players so that they are equally spaced out along the entire length of the rope (e.g., 15'L rope for 5 players). Instruct students that they must keep at least one hand on the wall at all times.

Observations:

- Are the students cooperating when setting up the rope?
- Are the students able to coordinate their hands and feet while moving laterally?
- Is the "climbing leader" communicating with other members of his/her team?
- Are the climbers communicating with each other?
- Are the students able to discriminate right from left?

Strategies to REDUCE difficulty:

- Allow only one team at a time to move across the wall
- Move only in one direction
- Move the floor spots closer to the wall
- Decrease the distance between spots
- Decrease the area of the playing surface
- Slow the game down to ensure communication

Strategies to INCREASE difficulty:

- Add additional colors to the set-up
- Encourage movement in both directions by adding game cards
- Move floor spots farther from the wall and lower hand targets
- Increase the distance between spots
- Call out right- or left-hand/foot combinations
- Determine "team objectives" before you begin

Activity Name: IT ROCKS! TEAM TRAVERSE

Difficulty: ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆

Purpose: To promote team cooperation and communication, build stamina, and reinforce eye/hand coordination, color identification, visual planning, strength, flexibility, balance, and stability. This activity uses the game cards and is designed for larger groups. Students move in opposite directions along the wall while tethered together as in the TRANGO TRIO. All movements are dictated by the game-cards signal called by a teacher or student.

Materials: Minimum 18'-20' of wall/floor spots; 1 set of game cards; 2 climbing-style ropes approximately 20'L each; 6 or more carabiners per rope, or as many carabiners as players per team.

Procedure: At least 6 students are needed to participate. The maximum number of players is determined by the number of carabiners and length of rope you have available. Divide students equally into two teams and them stand in line at either end of the IT ROCKS! wall (Side A or Side B). Give each team a length of rope (approximately 20'L) and one carabiner per player. Tie a loop at each end of the rope (a bowline or overhand loop knot). Clip one carabiner into each loop. One player will be the "climbing leader" and they will be the first to start across the wall. The "tag climber" will be the last climber to move across the wall. Tie a loop and add a carabiner for the remaining players so that they are equally spaced out along the entire length of the rope. Instruct students that they must keep at least one hand on the wall at all times. Next, determine who will "call out" the game cards. Begin the game by drawing a card. Read the card aloud (e.g., Right Red) and allow 3-5 seconds for the first player to make a move. Draw another card, read it aloud and, again, allow 3-5 seconds for each player to move. Continue until one team has reached the goal of moving their entire team from one side to the other. If one player falls off or lets go of the wall, the entire team must restart the game!

Observations:

- Are the students cooperating while setting up the rope?
- Are the students able to coordinate their hands and feet while moving laterally?
- Is the "climbing leader" communicating with his/her team members?
- Are the climbers communicating with each other?
- Are the climbers frustrated?

Strategies to REDUCE difficulty:

- Allow only one team to move at a time

- Move only in one direction
- Move the floor spots closer to the wall
- Decrease the distance between spots
- Allow a spotter to help guide players

Strategies to INCREASE difficulty:

- Increase the cadence in which the cards are called
 - Encourage movement in both directions
 - Move floor spots farther from the wall and lower hand targets
- " Increase the distance between spots

IT ROCKS!

Developmental Traversing Activity for All Abilities Self Evaluation Data Collection Sheet

Directions: List student names, select colors for game and record total number of touches (hand plus foot).

Student Name	Color Code	T1	T2	T3
1. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____
6. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____
7. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____
8. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____
9. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____
10. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____
11. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____
12. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____
13. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____
14. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____
15. _____	R Y B G	_____	_____	_____

**What do kids have to say?
"WOW, this game ... IT ROCKS!"**



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