

Fish Tunnel Activity Guide

with Activities & Games by Sue Wilkinson OTR/L



Introduction

Welcome to the Fantasy Fish Tunnel. The Fish Tunnel encourages crawling, which provides good co-contraction and heavy-work pressure while the sides of the tunnel create a womb like space for calming. Therapists love the versatility of the Fish Tunnel for the variety of sensory activities and experiences it offers, while kids adore the Fish's friendly appeal. Have an ocean of fun with the Fantasy Fish Tunnel!

Crawling is one of the most important activities in childhood development. The Fantasy Fish Tunnel easily engages all children, even those with low muscle tone (hypotonia) in fun crawling activities. Crawling activities have a multitude of benefits including:

- Strengthening trunk muscles such as abdominal, back and neck muscles.
- Calming and organizing behavior by activating the proprioceptors during the active movement work of crawling.
- Building shoulder girdle, forearm and wrist muscle strength which helps in forming good handwriting skills.
- Strengthening accessory muscles used in respiration, to help promote improved focus, concentration, speech and language.
- Strengthening ocular tracking for coordinated eye movements.
- Improving bilateral coordination or using two sides of the body together.

The Fantasy Fish Tunnel also assists in calming a child. This occurs when the tunnel is used with active heavy work or deep pressure calming.

Product Use

Use the Fish Tunnel at home, in the clinic or at school, with individuals or small groups. Teachers enjoy placing the Fish Tunnel at the door so each child in the class can crawl through the entrance. Therapists use the Fish Tunnel for heavy-work activities and cool downs to transition children slowly down a long hallway. Kids spread the word about the Fantasy Fish Tunnel, so watch it quickly become a clinic, school and neighborhood favorite! Here are a few activities to get started:

Grow Fish Grow!

The hungry fish wants you to feed him!

- Child pushes a bean bag chair, therapy ball or physioroll (“peanut ball”).
- Child “feeds the fish,” seeing how much the fish grows with lots of balls and beanbags.
- Child attempts to ride the fish, balancing on the fish’s lumpy body.

Fish Parade

This group activity is great for working on cognitive concepts. Children form a parade on their hands and knees and crawl in as fish food.

- What color fish are they?
- What animals are they feeding the fish (crab, lobster, starfish, etc.)?
- How many little fish will the big fish eat?

Shark!

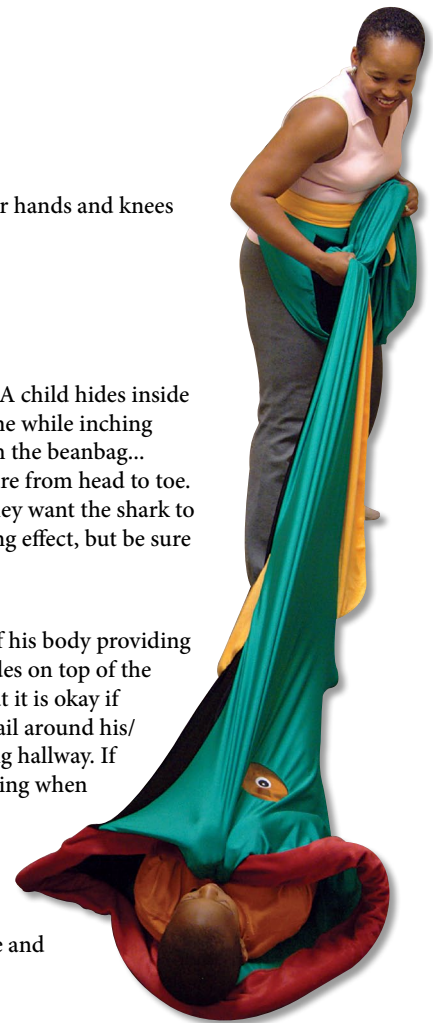
This activity can be quite exciting when played with several large, heavy-duty beanbag chairs. A child hides inside the fish’s tummy. The therapist or caregiver, representing the shark, hums the Jaws movie theme while inching closer with the beanbag to the child huddled inside the Fantasy Fish. Using deep pressure with the beanbag... “munch, munch, munch” goes the shark over the fish with the child inside, giving deep pressure from head to toe. Let the child control the activity by allowing him or her to say “Stop,” “Out” or “Jaws” when they want the shark to stop or apply more pressure. Most children really love this game and eventually it has a calming effect, but be sure to monitor the child’s response closely.

Caught the Big One!

This is a calming activity as a child is slowly dragged across a carpeted floor with the weight of his body providing calming resistance. “Let’s show your parent/teacher that you caught the big fish!” The child rides on top of the fish or inside the fish for more calming input. Most children prefer to lie on their tummies, but it is okay if they ride sitting until they feel more secure. The therapist/teacher can wrap the Fantasy Fish tail around his/her waist to more comfortably pull the child. It is best to move extremely slowly through a long hallway. If the child does not yet appear calm enough, then repeat. This activity can be significantly calming when implemented by therapist or teacher. Do not attempt this with a load that exceeds 100 lbs.

Modifications:

Even children who can’t crawl love the Caught the Big One! activity. A large tire tube can be placed inside the tunnel. Children can be positioned on top of the tunnel, riding in a slightly flexed position, with head supported on the tire tube. As they are pulled, they adore the tactile and proprioceptive input as their bottoms experience the feel of the carpet as they are pulled.



Care & Safety

Fantasy Fish Tunnel is 12' long and the Baby Fish Tunnel is 7' long. Both are made of a breathable Lycra. It can be spot cleaned with a damp cloth and hung to dry. Fantasy Fish Tunnel should be used with adult supervision only. Recommended for ages three and up. Do not exceed a weight limit of a 100 lb. child if pulling the child in the tunnel for calming activities.

Recommended Products

Abilitations offers several products that are fun to use with the Fantasy Fish Tunnel. Try these exciting ideas:

- **PhysioBalls or Rolls:** 008912, 1004578, 1004585, 009158, 009161
- **SharkSkool:** 022959
- **TouchMeButterflies:** 1286166



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