Physical Therapy Activity of the Week - **All About Core**

We have talked about **core strength** before for PT activity of the week. Core strength is so critical for all of us, but especially for growing kids as they learn and develop new skills. In addition to it helping with their gross motor skills it also helps with their fine motor skills because the more solid their trunk is, the easier it is to manipulate their hands. There oodles of ways to work on core strength and we don’t have room for all of them. Here are a few ways to challenge your child’s core strength (and possibly your own as well)!

*Yoga and pilates*- offer many ways to activate the core. Kids love things that are themed, so we often adapt poses and give them a name that kids can relate to. One example is the **Rainbow pose**, have your child get on their hands and knees, then push their legs out straight and only have their hands and feet touching the ground. Their body will look like an arch or a rainbow. See if they can hold for longer periods of time each time. **Boat pose or flower**- Have your child start in a sitting position and have them bring their knees towards their chest and lift their feet of the ground, then have them pretend to row the boat from side to side while keeping their balance on their bottoms. **Tree or a Statue**- have your child stand with their feet apart and arms resting at their sides, then have them bring their hands together and bring one leg off the ground. See if they can put bend that knee and balance their foot against the other leg and hold the position.

*Wheelbarrow walking* uses weight bearing through the arms while your child is walking on their hands and you are holding them at their hips or legs or feet. The further out you hold them the harder it is for them. Start in close at their hips/waist and as they progress, slowly move support out further to continue to challenge them. Also watch to see if they are completely sagging in the middle. If that is happening, either give them a small rest or move your hands so that they are getting a little more support. **Crab walking** is also fun. This may take some coordination so the first step would be to get your child to make a table top. If they can do that, the next step is to have them try to take a step with their feet and then hands. Eventually they will be able to walk with hands and feet simultaneously. If they are sagging in the middle have them reset. The flatter they keep their middle the more they are working their core muscles.