Let them Roll.......... 

If you've ever watched a preschooler roll around on the floor, you know it's a surefire giggle producer. But what you may not know is that rolling is great for their bodies and their brain for several reasons, listed below. Also, many kids, for a variety of reasons, have a difficult time rolling. If they have delays in any of the following areas, this is why you may see them struggle, and why it is even more important to get rolling!

-Vestibular Development (to assist in balance) 
-Midline Development (to assist in coordinated movement and thinking) 
-Sensory Development (to assist in creating their understanding of the world) 
-Gross Motor Development (to build strength and coordination) 
-Proprioception (to know where your body is in space)
A FEW THOUGHTS BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

-Fun First- If it’s fun, do it. If it’s not, stop!

-Don’t Rush- Repetition is great for kids so stick with it.

-Avoid Frustration- Try it a few times and if it is difficult, stop and take a break.

-Be Encouraging- Whether they move perfect or not is not the point. The idea is to challenge their bodies and move in ways they may never have before. Be positive!

WHAT TO LOOK FOR- When starting out, kids tend to roll the top half of their body first then flip their legs over. Watch to see if they can keep their bodies straight like a pencil and if they can roll in both directions.

LET’S GET ROLLING-

-IF YOU CHILD HAS A HARD TIME ROLLING- Create an incline or a hill. Prop your couch cushions up with other pillows and roll on down. When they get good at this, have them roll UP the mountain.

-ROLL ON DIFFERENT SURFACES- The floor, the grass, a trampoline, a bed...

-ROLL INTO THINGS- Stack some large toy blocks or small boxes and have kids roll into them. Have them pick up the blocks with their feet and place in large basket

-ROLL OVER THINGS- Bowling pins, “speed bumps” made by rolling up towels and placing under a blanket, their siblings (steam roller), you. Be a rolling pin to roll out some pizza dough.

* Adapted from the Moving Smart Smart Steps Preschool Playground Programme, March 13, 2011, Gill Connell