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## **How to use Kids' Express Train Scarves.**

“What you don’t have in your hips, you won’t have in your lips.” - a physical therapist told me many years ago. Kids need to move their arms, legs, and trunk, which will have a direct effect on how their tongue, lips, and jaw can move. So, in order to promote verbal skills in children, we need to get kids moving!

Our scarves can promote that kind of gross motor movement. We encourage two things with our scarves:

- **free movement** where children explore their own creative ways to use our scarves
- **structured activities** that promote imitation and direction following.

Here are some ideas.

1. Play a variety of different songs - some slow, some fast. Our *Owie* song would be an example of a nice slower song to play. Any of our more active songs (especially from our *Rocking and Talking CD* and our *Drills on Wheels 1 CD*) would be great as well. Classical music of any kind is always an excellent choice. While the music plays, move your scarf around and make it fly in various ways. See what your child does in response to the music. Listen to the music and try to visually do with the scarf what you hear in the music. For example, if the song has a very distinct beat, make very distinct movements with your scarf. The freedom of movement is the goal here.

2. Play an imitation game. To the tune “*The Farmer in the Dell*”, sing this song as you move your scarf in the way the song says.

My scarf goes up. (up up up – repeat these words after singing the lyrics)

My scarf goes down. (down, down, down)

My scarf goes round and round and round. (round, round, round)

My scarf goes in. (in, in, in – say “in” as you hide your scarf in your hand or up your sleeve.)

My scarf comes out. (out, out, out)

My scarf flies about, about, about. (fly, fly, fly)

3. Play a Hiding game with objects and the scarf. Kids love hide and seek games. Such games teach the important cognitive skill called object permanence – knowing that objects are there even when they are out of sight. Use our stuffed monkey, *Chez* or any other stuffed animal or favorite object, cover it up with one

of our scarves, and sing this song to the tune of “*Where is Thumbkin?*”

*Where is the monkey? Where is the monkey?  
There he is. There he is.  
Hi, hi monkey. Hi, hi monkey.  
Hide him again. Hide him again.*

Or hide the monkey under the scarf, cup your hands around your mouth, and chant, “Where are you?” This silly chant promotes imitation of gestures combined with verbalizing. While working with parents and children, I encourage parents to model gestures combined with verbalizations that are enticing. Being able to make sounds while moving or gesturing is a wonderful skill.

4. Play another Hiding game. Hide the scarf. Some children show decreased attention for structured activities - especially those involving interaction with another person. With those children who display limited attention, take our scarves and stuff them up your sleeve, in your hands, in a tube, in a box with a lid, or in your sock. Teach your child to search for the scarf and pull it out. Also put the scarf in your child’s sock, shoe, sleeve, pocket, or shirt in order to teach looking for an object. Persistence is a skill that is essential to learning, and this kind of searching will increase that ability to stay with a task and persist to completion.

5. Tie our scarves to the end of a plastic pole to make it look like a flag. Wave your flag and walk to a John Sousa’s march as if you were marching in a parade.

6. Use our scarves for pulling out of holes cut in posters. Scarf pulling is an excellent way to check a child’s receptive skills. You can print the picture, Ride the Horsie, from our CD ROM, Pix for Drills on Wheels 1 and 2 for this purpose. Laminate this picture, and cut out the holes as indicated. Push and pull the scarf through the holes, taking turns. You can also use some of our other picture sheets from our Illustration Station CDROM such as Slide from the Conversation Station CD or Bye Bye from Imitation Station. Laminate them and cut holes in various places on the picture. Tell your child that the scarf is coming out of the slide, the steps, the grass, etc., and see if your child visually scans or reaches for the correct object. Children will enjoy pulling the scarf out of the hole and will likely attempt to put the scarf in a hole for you to pull. This creates a turn-taking activity. You can also draw a simple picture of a house with a door and windows, a sun, and a tree out of tagboard. Cut holes in those objects to put the scarf in and pull it out.

7. Match Colors. Collect a variety of common objects that are yellow, red, blue, and green. Have children place the objects on the scarf of the same color.

8. Imaginative play. Language development directly correlates with a child’s level of play. Use a scarf in a variety of imaginative play schemes. It can be a blanket for wrapping up a baby doll, a picnic blanket for pretend food and plates, a scarf to wear on our *Chez* monkey’s head, a goofy hat that you can sneeze off your head, a wash cloth for cleaning off the table, a towel for baby doll’s bath time, or a handkerchief. The possibilities are endless. Let your imagination go wild! Use props, such as scarves, egg shakers, and drums to augment our songs and provide added interest in participating with others in musical games.

9. Use our instrumental tracks from the Vocalocomotion CD and Rocking and Talking to create both free movement activities with scarves as well as direction following activities. Give children directions using prepositions of up, down, to the side, under, etc.

10. Additional “Scarf songs” from our Drills on Wheels 2 CD. The raps, “Fish, Birds, and Bunnies” and “Shake and Wave” are both songs written specifically to use with scarves. These raps encourage imitation of body movements. Some children will find it easier to imitate gross motor movement if the song is more relaxed and slower paced. “Fish, Birds, and Bunnies” is slower paced than the upbeat rap, “Shake and Wave”. Experiment with both songs to determine what works best for each child.

Enjoy!

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