

Firefly by Leckey Webinar Series

# Things you need to know about Playpak

**Part 2: Sitting pretty – helping achieve independent sitting**

13<sup>th</sup> April 2016

Panellist: Nick Mant, PT Flying Start Children's Therapy

Moderator: Clare Greer



## Aims of today's webinar:

1. To explain how to transition from the early positions to sitting positions.
2. To outline how Playpak can be used in early sitting and more advanced sitting positions.
3. To discuss the challenges children face with sitting and provide techniques to assist your child to transfer from lying to sitting.
4. To answer as many questions as possible!



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Part 2: Sitting pretty

# 2.1 Early sitting



# Early sitting

## Why is it important?



- Helps to build your child's tummy and back muscles.
- They can begin to participate in more social activities with siblings.
- Develops your child's body and spatial awareness.
- Helps them control their arm and leg movements.
- Improves their communication skills.

## Early sitting: *Common difficulties*

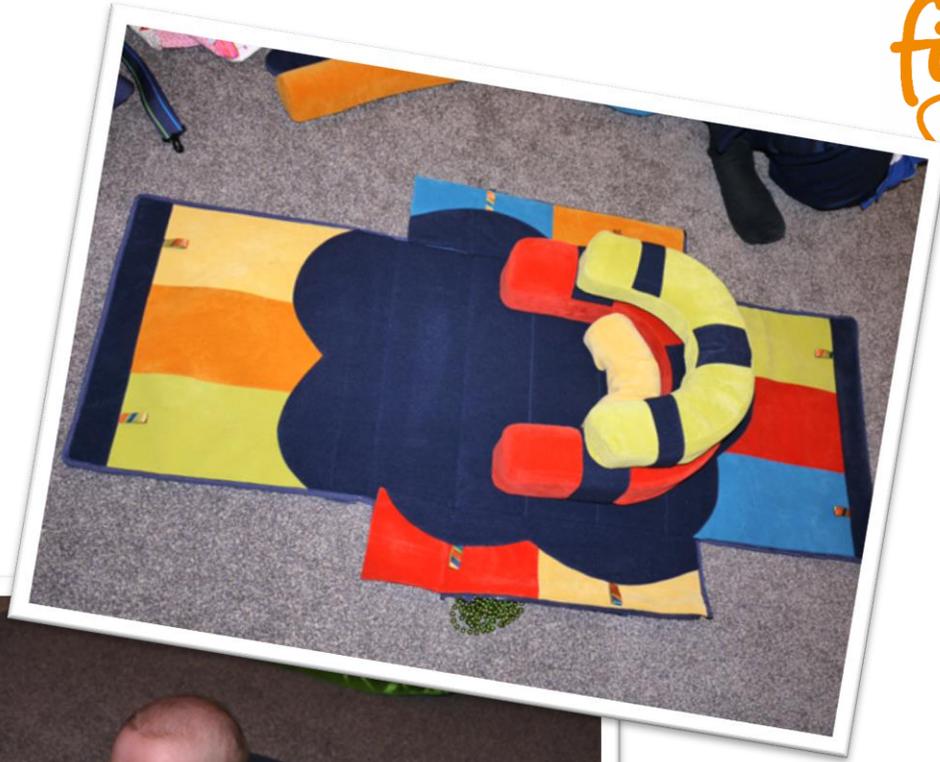
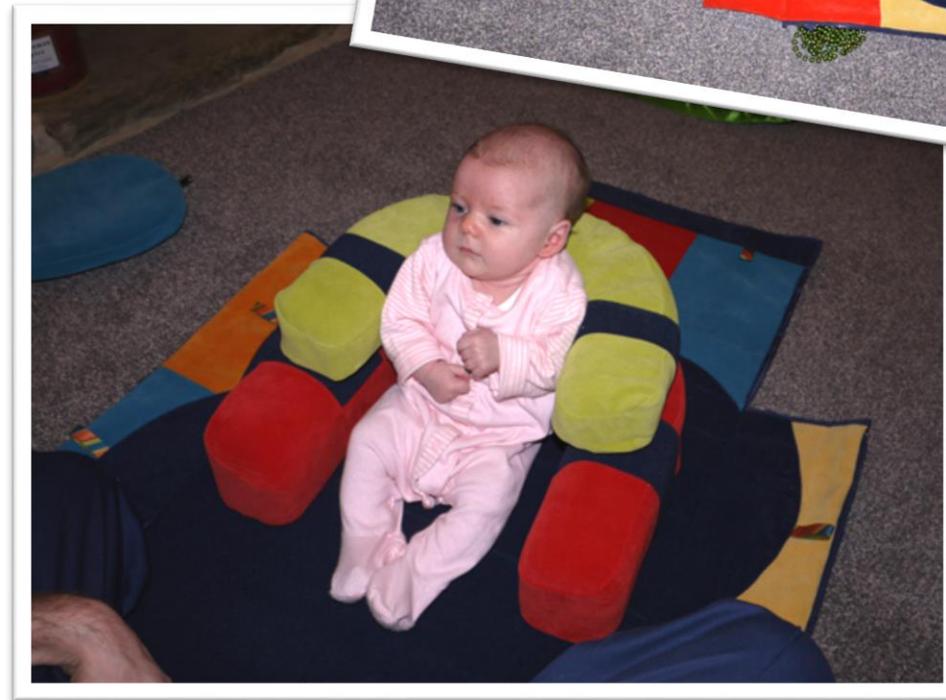
- Children with low tone often slouch when sitting, and take a long time to develop stability in their tummy and back muscles to maintain this position.
- Children with high tone often increase their tone when challenged and will adopt poor posture if they are not supported adequately.
- Children do not choose to adopt these positions; and are not the most comfortable way to sit. It is their over-active muscles forcing them into unwanted positions.

*“Sitting is a difficult position to maintain. Therefore work within the limits of your child or with guidance from your therapist”*



## Early sitting: *Solutions*

- By reclining the sitting position of the Playpak, the child can reach for toys.
- As the baby becomes more comfortable in this position, the roll at the base of the horseshoes can be removed.



## Early sitting: *Solutions cont.*

- The strap can be placed over their pelvis to provide support.
- From the reclined position we can also do baby pull-ups encouraging them to maintain their own head control.



## Early sitting:

### *Aims*

- Develop your child's core stability so they can sit up themselves.
- Aim for head control – reclined sitting is ok, as fully upright sitting is difficult to maintain.
- Encourage your child to use their hands in sitting - it is essential that the trunk has adequate support, which can be provided by the Playpak horseshoes, strap and rolls.



## Early sitting: *Aims cont.*

- Encourage hands to come forward - this can be achieved by doing the activities discussed in the previous blog. This will help baby to prop up their trunk, until they achieve adequate trunk control.
- Hands on knees or playing with feet are ideal, and when enough trunk support is provided or control is gained, then hands can be used to play.



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# Early sitting Questions?

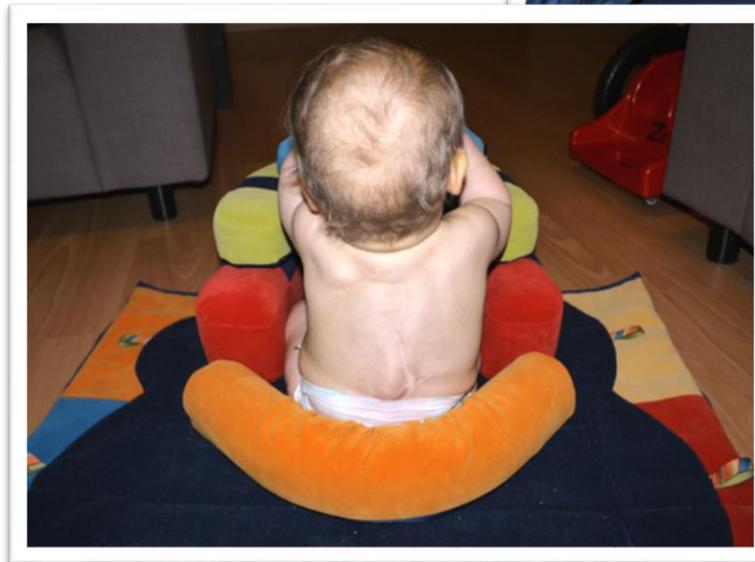
## Advancing sitting postures

- When baby has enough ability to maintain their own sitting postures, they can start to improve on this.
- With Playpak, support can be progressively taken away so the child is more active on their own.
- Many of the difficulties at this stage have been overcome at the early sitting stages.



## Advancing sitting postures: *Solutions*

- Take away the second horseshoe so the upper trunk is not supported as shown in picture 1
- Picture 2 shows the wrong way to sit in the support



## Advancing sitting postures: *Solutions cont.*

- This position will still maintain the correct leg position – preventing looped sitting.
- Looped sitting is when a child's legs roll outwards from their hips and knees and their feet touch forming a loop.
- Long legged sitting is encouraged to assist with side to side movement – the horseshoe helps with this.

- Using Playpak backwards encourages upright sitting and activates back and tummy muscles.



## Advancing sitting postures: *Solutions*

- Placing objects at the side of the support and removing the lap strap encourages the child to reach over the edge and roll their legs to the side.
- This process is the start of side sitting.
- This is an essential transitional position we move through to get up from lying to kneeling.
- This process teaches your child saving reactions if they were to fall from sitting or later on from standing.



# Early/advanced sitting: Have you considered...

Looped sitting is a natural way that babies learn to sit, as it gives them a large base of support. However, how can a baby move from side to side if their feet are touching each other, making a loop with their legs?

How can we learn to sit if we are unable to place our hands forward?

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Part 2: Sitting pretty

# 2.2 Lying to sitting



# Lying to sitting: Why is it important?

- We often work with children in static positions, however the movement between the positions is just as useful if we are at the point of being able to achieve it.
- You can assist with rolling by assisting at the top of the arm or hips.
- Lying to sitting is a complex movement that children complete in a variety of ways.
- As mentioned in the last webinar, it is important to work on movement patterns in order to avoid destructive postures.
- You should be able to try this transition if your child is able to sit with head control and requires support around hips only.
- Your therapist can provide guidance if you are unsure if your child is ready to progress to these skills.

## Lying to sitting: *Common difficulties*

- Children need to repeat movements many times before they are properly learnt. This is difficult for children with any kind of movement difficulty.
- It is important not only to master the back lying, tummy lying and side lying positions, but also the transitions between them.
- Transitions involve movement through many planes, with the body bending, straightening, turning and moving limbs in isolation to each other.



## Lying to sitting: *Solutions cont.*

- Lie your child on their back, hold one hand and assist them into the side lying position by taking their hand across their body.
- Gently lead their arm away from the floor and they should start to lift their body and put weight through their elbow.
- It is important to assist and not do all the work for them.



## Lying to sitting: *Solutions cont.*

- You will be able to tell if your child is pulling back (bracing) with the arm you are assisting with.
- They should be able to hold their head up themselves and move their body to assist.
- As your child improves you will be able to reduce the amount of help provided.



- With your assisting hand, ease the child slightly forward and to the side in the direction they need to go to sit themselves up more.

## Lying to sitting: *Solutions cont.*

The child should now be putting weight through their hand – and pulling on your supporting hand.

If they stop pulling on your hand you can place your other hand on their body and ease them into the sitting position.

*“Remember children move into sitting positions in many different ways.”*



*“If they get themselves into the sitting position they may still need a hand to get their balance.”*

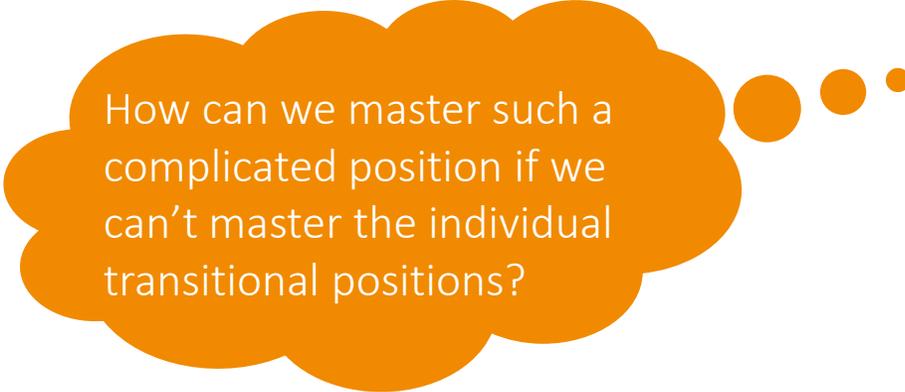
## Lying to sitting: *Aims*

- From these early positions we have taught great movement patterns; rolling and moving to sitting.
- We have hopefully avoided 'cheating' and 'destructive' patterns of movements early on in your child's journey.

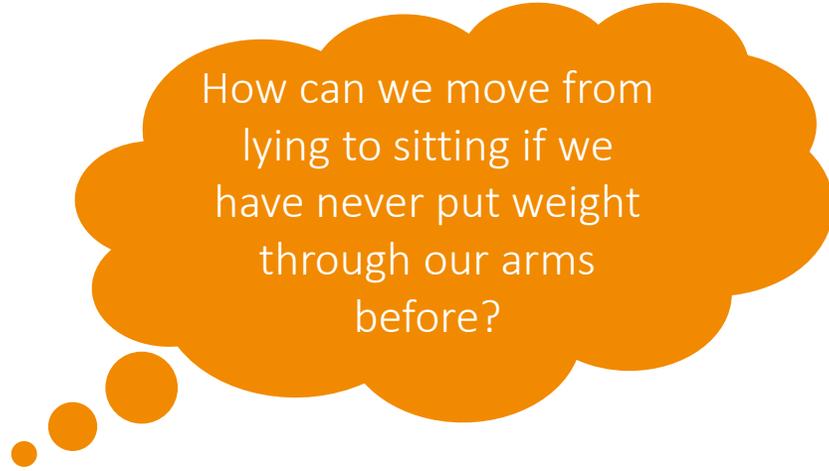


*"If the early building blocks are set well, the later building blocks will fall much more easily into place!"*

# Lying to sitting: Have you considered...



How can we master such a complicated position if we can't master the individual transitional positions?



How can we move from lying to sitting if we have never put weight through our arms before?

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# Lying to sitting Questions?

## Transitioning from the early positions

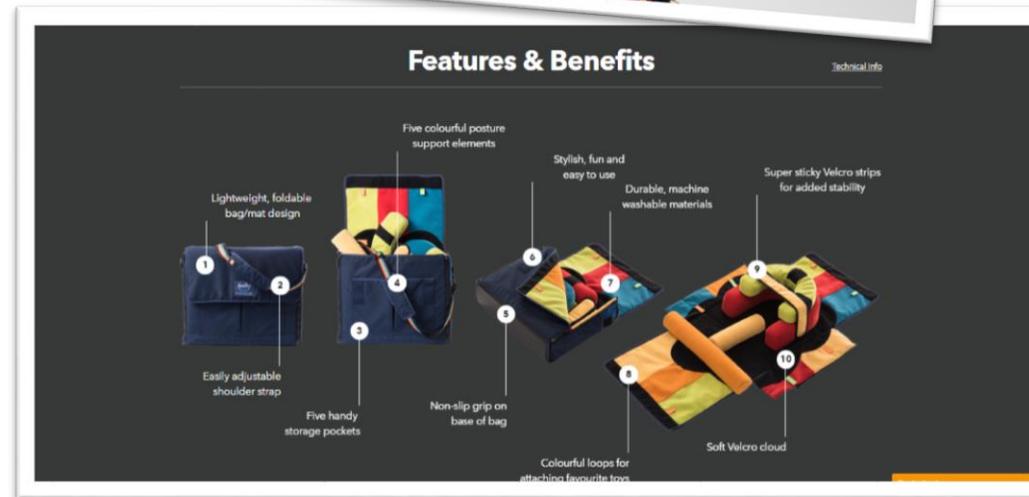
Using Playpak, we have practiced the transitions to early and advanced sitting postures, which help a child learn how to move and become more active when seated.

*"I will work on as many of these skills as possible with all children, even if I know they will not reach certain milestones, to ensure the best possible building blocks are in place for them to succeed at more challenging postures and abilities."*



# Resources

- [www.fireflyfriends.com/playpak](http://www.fireflyfriends.com/playpak)
- Playpak [Videos](#)
- Playpak [Fact Sheets](#) – The importance of early development through play, how to pack and unpack Playpak, activity suggestions etc.
- Playpak [FAQs](#)
- Nick's [Blog Posts](#)
- Things you need to know about Playpak: Part 3 Moving on – kneeling and crawling position. 4<sup>th</sup> May 2013.





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# Final Questions?





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