



2020!

2020 has a nice ring to it and we are off to a good start at Mindstretch. We now offer six unique classes and programmes designed to fit our children's needs. Our new Tailored Tutoring Programme is one example, begun in 2020 for children who require extra supervision.

We take personalised education very seriously. This term is our 'Individual Education and Development Plan' (IEDP) term. Our teachers design the plans in consultation with me or our Head of Education. They then discuss the scope and objectives with each child and their parents, and we may make additional tweaks based on that input.

Our goal is also to equip our learners for the real world. That is why they carry their own bags and must pack away and tidy up after themselves. We teach vocational skills in our more senior classes.

**Early child development is crucial.
Progress and inclusion is our goal.**

We have fun too, as at our recent Valentine's Family Picnic, where face painting and balloon modelling were the usual big hit. Such events are important, allowing the Mindstretch community to meet and bond. Thanks to all who attended.

I hope you enjoy the following articles on the benefits of trampolining and working on the vertical.

Thank you for your support!

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Mindstretch teachers relate classroom learning to the world outside. When learning shapes, we might go outside and identify a triangular roof, square paver and round road sign.

Our creative butterfly pegs shown alongside were based on observation of butterflies in the garden.



BOUNCE!

The Benefits of Trampolines for Children on the Autism Spectrum

Trampolining is for everybody, but it can be especially beneficial for children with autism.

That is why we have trampolines at our Preschool properties, and why we have a small indoor trampoline in our youngest class. It also explains the Jumping Castle we hire for school celebrations.

These are some of the benefits we get:

Improves Motor Skills, Coordination and Balance

- Trampoline bouncing causes a constantly shifting centre of gravity. Children must respond by adjusting their positions. Their vestibular systems are stimulated, and both sides of their bodies and brains engage to keep them balanced. Their awareness of their bodies' position in space (proprioception) improves. So does their overall coordination.

The **vestibular and proprioceptive systems** help process information received from the five senses. Together, they build body awareness and knowledge of where we fit in our environment. The vestibular system, centred in the inner ear, is critical for balance, coordination and spatial awareness. It is a bit like an internal GPS. The proprioceptive system gives information about the body's position in space, such as the direction you are facing, or how close you are to an object. It is governed by sensory receptors situated in the muscles, joints, tendons and other tissues. Bouncing stimulates these proprioceptors, giving essential proprioceptive feedback.

Helps Muscle Tone, Strength and Posture

- Jumping engages many parts of the body: muscle tone and strength, head control, core strength, and posture all improve.

Delivers Health and Fitness

- According to a NASA study, trampolining is a more efficient workout than running. It improves blood circulation and heart health. Lymphatic circulation improves, and that boosts the immune system.

Builds Happy Confidence

- Bouncing gets oxygen circulating and stimulates the release of mood-enhancing endorphins. There is no right or wrong way to jump. Every child is successful. This increases courage and confidence.

Allows a Sensory Outlet

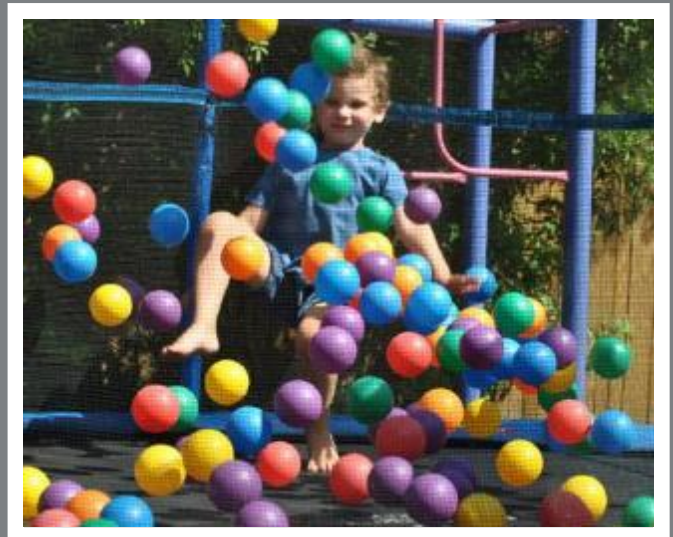
- Bouncing can help some children with sensory overload to self-regulate. Repetitive physical movements is a common coping mechanism for children with autism. The repetitive motion of trampolining can provide the stimulation needed and act as a substitute for less helpful behaviours. The bouncing channels nervous energy away from the body and relaxes the mind. Soon the child is less anxious, and they can then focus and learn.

Aids Sociability

- Children on the autism spectrum may need help socialising. Trampolining is free of the stress of competition and complicated rules, and this helps social interaction. Some children engage quickly. Others we must encourage. We might have a child bounce with just one other child initially. Or an adult bouncing gently with the child may work best. Some children respond to singing and games on the trampoline. Like all things at Mindstretch, we tailor the activity to what a child needs.

Reinforces Learning

- 'Exer-learning' refers to the combination of exercise and learning, which has been shown to help children learn. We find movement-based learning – for example, drawing letters and numbers in chalk on the trampoline – is particularly rewarding.



Working on the Upright

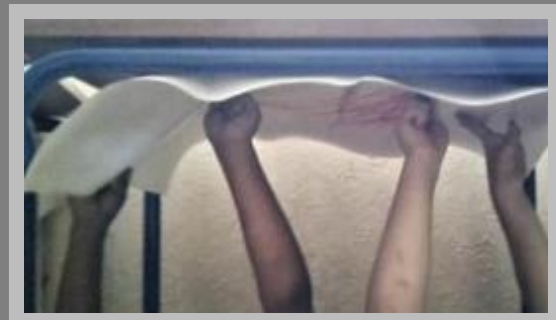
Painting, drawing and writing on a vertical surface is great for our Mindstretch children.

- ✓ The activity strengthens the shoulder girdle and promotes stability.
- ✓ It is an important foundation for promoting fine motor skills and developing a more mature grip.
- ✓ Children learn how to master important pre-writing lines, strokes and shapes when they work on a large scale using whole body movements.

We have blackboards at Mindstretch and encourage this activity. We also keep a large roll of paper on a frame in some of our classes. We pull down the paper and the kids can scribble and draw. At other times we set up mural painting as an outside activity.



Sometimes we even work upside down. The activity promotes upper body strength and coordination. Our children love the change in perspective. Work is made fun and they actively engage.



We Welcome Your Feedback

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