



WHAT IS W-SITTING

When your child sits on their bottom with their knees bent forward and their feet facing away from their hips (if you were to stand above them, their legs look like a “W”).

Why do kids W-Sit?

This is a common way for kids to sit until about age three, as it offers a wide base of support and makes it easier for kids to play with their hands. It’s common when kids don’t sit in this position for a long time or move in and out of it easily. However, it becomes a concern when this is your child’s preferred sitting position or he/she sits in that position for a long time.



WHY IS W-SITTING BAD



- **Limited Core/Trunk Strength:** W-Sitting provides a wide base of support, where your child doesn’t have to use their muscles, but also limits movement of their trunk and the shifting of weight necessary with activating balance. Your child may develop poor posture and “slouch”.
- **Pigeon-Toed:** Increased hip range of motion and weakness can lead to “in-toeing”.
- **No Hand Preference or Difficulty Reaching Across Body:** Due to limited trunk rotation. These are important skills for writing and other motor activities.
- **Pain:** This strain on the hips and joints may cause internal dislocation. This can lead to later hip pain or other orthopedic problems.
- **Poor Speech and Academic Skills:** Core weakness can impact the fine motor skills of the mouth, which impact articulation/speech production. Additionally, the limited movement of your child’s head/eyes when W-Sitting may impact head movements for reading and writing.



HOW TO ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO SIT



- Use a verbal cue, such as “fix your legs” when you see your child sitting in a W-position. Initially, help them by moving them into the position (rather than just picking them up and setting them back down). They need to feel and learn how to move into other positions.
- Encourage your child to sit in other positions. Play games having your child imitate your body movements into each of these positions:
 - criss cross (alternate which leg is on top)
 - ring sit (bend knees and feet are out in front and touching)
 - long sit (legs straight in front)
 - side sit (knees bent and both legs to same side)
 - tall kneeling (make sure not to sit back onto feet, pushing feet out)
 - squatting down to play (encourages strengthening of lower extremities and trunk muscles)
- Provide your child a small chair or stool without a back, where their feet are on the floor and knees are bent at 90 degree angle.
- Build trunk muscles by playing reaching games, having your child reach for objects at different heights and distances on each side.
- Increase flexibility by sitting against a wall with legs stretched out in front of you. You can add movement by shifting your weight back and forth to move forward. Make it fun, have a race!
- Movement helps development. Encourage yoga, movement games (like Twister), obstacle courses with household furniture or playground/outdoor play.

