**Low Muscle Tone**

## **Muscle tone** is the amount of tension (or resistance to movement) in muscles when they are at rest. Our muscle tone helps us to hold our bodies upright when we are sitting and standing. Changes in muscle tone are what enable us to move. Muscle tone also contributes to the control, speed and amount of movement we can achieve.

## **Low muscle tone** is used to describe muscles that are floppy, which is also known as ***hypotonia***. Children with low muscle tone may need to put in more effort to get their muscles moving properly when they are doing an activity. They may also have difficulty maintaining good posture when sitting or standing. Many children with low muscle tone have delays in their gross motor development (e.g. rolling, sitting, walking). Low muscle tone may be caused by problems with the nerves or muscles. Often the low muscle tone is idiopathic, which means the cause is unknown.

**Signs and symptoms of low muscle tone**

* + Floppy appearance or seem limp when you lift them
  + have increased flexibility in their joints
  + have poor posture
  + get tired easily (have low endurance) because of the extra effort they have to put in to activate their muscles or maintain their posture
  + not have much strength in their muscles
  + have delays in reaching gross motor milestones, such as rolling, sitting, crawling or walking.

**Treatment for low muscle tone**Pediatric Physical Therapists are movement specialists that help children with low tone to build strength and endurance through exercise and correct movement patterns. We use our expertise to select the right challenge for each child and use our creativity to make it fun and engaging. Since it’s harder to move, these kids often need an extra dose of patience, practice and support to get the job done.