

## Universal Exercise Unit

The Universal Exercise Unit (UEU) is used to assist children in functional activities along with strengthening exercises. The children sometimes refer to the unit as the spider cage because of the bungees used. The children are hooked up in the "Spider Cage" with a belt around their waist that is attached to the cage using bungee cords. Just enough assistance is given using the bungee cords to allow the child the security and balance needed to practice activities on their own. The cage also allows the child and therapist to work on activities that would normally take 2-3 therapists to work on, by acting as extra hands. Children are able to accomplish activities in the spider cage that they are not able to do without the assistance of the bungee cords. Depending on the way the bungee cords are placed you can practice sitting, crawling, standing, strengthening exercises and many other activities.



Some of the kids that come to our clinic are not able to isolate certain muscles. This is a key part of being able to complete certain tasks. For example, a child who cannot roll over from his stomach to his back is often lacking hip extension. For this, we are able to put a table in the UEU and use a combination of pulleys and weights to work on strengthening specific muscles. Gravity can be eliminated in the UEU to make the strengthening exercises easier than traditional exercises.

Many children develop tone when in a standing position. Placing the child in the cage to strengthen and isolate certain muscle groups helps them use their muscles to counteract the spasticity. In addition, the cage is useful to stretch larger children with the use of leg splints, pulleys and weights. By suspending the child in the cage, we are able to work on vestibular stimulation, proprioception, and sensory integration dysfunction.

Kids love the security of the cage and it helps them to feel independent. As the child progresses you can reduce the amount of assistance or increase the amount of weight until the child can complete the task independently.

