

Gross Motor SKILLS

Because children mature and grow at different rates, their gross motor development will also be individual. Yet motor skills are sequential, meaning that children will develop skills based on skills already mastered. Therefore, children need a variety of experiences and the opportunity to practice new skills.

Developmental milestones for young children are, in order:

- Muscle control and stability
- Locomotion skills
- Body coordination skills

▲ To be able to perform the above skills children need to be able to:

- Move body through space: coordination
- Move objects through space
- Balance
- Be moved through space

■ Large Motor Areas and Equipment:

Throwing:

- balls (all different sizes)
- bean bags
- shower puffs
- Targets: laundry baskets, buckets, carpet squares, boxes, mylar (helium) balloons, upturned umbrellas, sheets of construction paper, stacks of blocks
- ring toss
- bowling pin sets or homemade bowling using ball with empty two-liter pop bottles
- Frisbees (soft)

Movement/Dance:

- scarves
- hoops
- ribbons, wands with ribbons attached
- feathers
- crepe paper

Leg Movement:

- romper stompers/coffee cans with ropes
- balance beams
- spots, footprints, carpet squares for creating tracks
- riding toys
- shoe boxes or rectangular Kleenex boxes (as skates)

Fact:

Motor development first begins with body awareness (naming body parts, moving isolated body parts, sensory stimulation, etc.) and balance.

Body

Movement:

Walking, running, hopping, skipping, galloping, climbing, marching, balancing, rolling, creeping, crawling, bouncing, stomping, sliding

- scooters
- ladders
- balance boards
- roller skates/blades
- kicking balls

Movement Action Songs and Fingerplay

Jumping:

- jump ropes
- mini-trampoline or rebounder
- hop scotch
- hanging targets (punch balls or balloons)
- mattresses, pillows
- in and out of hoops
- over obstacles (taped lines, shallow boxes)
- balls with handles
- on bubbles

Rocking/Swinging:

- rocking boats, toys, horses
- swings

Pushing:

- doll strollers
- shopping carts
- cars & trucks
- wheelbarrows
- lawnmowers
- chairs
- large boxes

Pulling:

- raking leaves
- wagons
- pulleys
- tug of war

Miscellaneous:

- Sit and Spin
- Parachute or large sheet or thin blanket/fabric
- hobby horse

Activities Ideas:

Follow the Path

To Do: Practice walking along a “track” beginning with simple tracks working up to more difficult. Walk along a tape line, a board, a raised balance beam, paper footprints, a curved rope, around the inside and outside of a hula hoop, etc. Walking games include: Ring Around the Rosy, Follow the Leader, Red Light Green Light

To Expand:

- Try walking with a bean bag on one foot.
- Try walking using both hands to hold a yardstick or thick dowel/broomstick in front of your body, over your head, low by your knees, straight up and down, etc.
- Walk while holding the parachute as a group. Walk on tip toes, heels, backwards, etc.

*Clap, clap, clap your hands
clap your hands together.*

*Clap, clap, clap your hands
clap your hands together.*

Continue with: tap your knees, tap you elbows, tickle your toes,, tap your head, rub your hands, etc.

*I clap up high
I clap down low.
I jump, jump, jump
And down I go.*

*Make yourself as tall as a house.
Make yourself as small as a mouse.
Make yourself as thin as a pin.
Make yourself as fat as a cat.*

*Row, row, row your boat
Gently as can be.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Gently down the stream.*
Row with partners facing each other, feet touching, holding hands. Continue rowing quickly, slowly, sideways, etc.

Clean It Up

Materials: Water, rags, soap

To Do: Wash: cars, riding toys, windows, mirrors, refrigerators, floors, play houses, etc.

Paint With Water

Materials: Large paint brushes, water, containers

To Do: Paint things outside using large paint brushes and cans of water.

Body Awareness

To Do: Standing or sitting, ask the children to make circles with the following body parts: hands, arms, legs, head, shoulders, feet, and hips

To Expand: Use bean bags to place on named body parts. “Put the bean bag on your head. Put the bean bag on your shoulder. Now your other shoulder. etc.”

Arm Circles

To Do: Give each child a ribbon stick or a length of ribbon or crepe paper. Make circles in front of your body, behind your body, above your head, down by your feet. Change hands and repeat.

To Expand: Use the ribbons with descriptive words: fast, slow, wiggly, smooth, wavy, high, low, etc.

Let’s Pretend

To Do: Play imaginary movement games. Move like a monster, king/queen, spider, dinosaur, robot, baby, mosquito, dragon, cloud, train, river, etc.

To Expand: Act out imaginary movements: holding a big ball, throwing a heavy rock, walking through hot lava, swimming through cold water, tossing popcorn, jumping over rainbows, etc.

Angels

To Do: Make snow angels with or without the snow. Try standing to make angel arms, laying on your back and laying on your tummy.

Pass It On

To Do: Sit in a circle (big or small) and play passing games. Pass a bean bag slow and fast. Try passing balls, pillows, toys, etc.

To Expand: Begin passing a stuffed cat. When the cat is half way around the circle, begin passing a stuffed dog who’s “chasing” the cat!

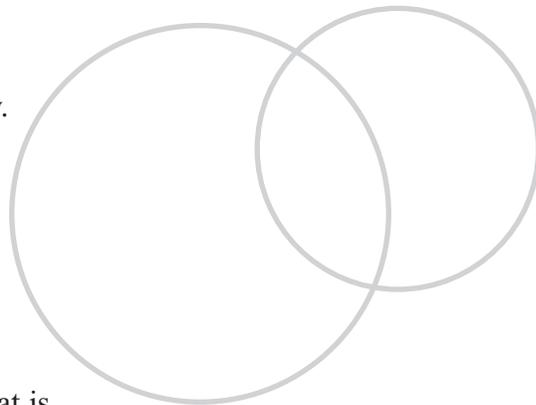
Clean Up the Backyard

Materials: Newspaper

To Do: Divide your group into two teams. Using a taped line or a length of rope, divide your space into two areas. Have the children of both teams begin by crumpling their newspaper into balls. Begin the game by tossing the balls over to the other team’s “backyard.” See which team can clean up their yard first. You can also use this type of activity for indoor snowball fights. Instead of newspaper try tossing: pom poms, yarn balls, shower puffs, cotton balls, etc.

Tip:

Movement is fun!
When we give young children opportunities to development their gross motor skills through active play, we can also hope we’re encouraging a positive approach to fitness to last their lifetime.



Jumping Games

To Do: How high can you jump? Jump on one foot. Jump on both feet. Can you jump from side to side? Can you jump forwards and backwards? Can you jump over? (the rope, box, toy) Can you jump crouched like a frog? Can you jump in the hula hoop? etc.

Bag Bounce

Materials: Brown grocery bags, newspaper

To Do: Make grocery sack balls. Fill paper or plastic grocery sacks with crumpled newspaper. Using masking tape secure the ends closed and wrap in tape to form a ball shape. Play catch indoors or out. Try laying on your backs and trying to keep the balls up in the air using just feet. Use lunch bags for smaller balls.

Find My Match

Materials: Various pairs of identical household items

To Do: Collect pairs of identical household items. Hide the items all over the house. For example, take a pair of tennis shoes and hide one in the living room and the other shoe in the kitchen. Have the children find the pairs of shoes.

Movement Games:

These games can be altered to include lots of different types of movement, not only type but also pace. For example: run slowly, skip quickly, jump around the circle, etc.

Red Rover, Red Rover

Simon Says

Follow the Leader

Red Light, Green Light

Mother May I?

Duck, Duck, Gray Duck

Ring Around the Rosey (*in place of "all fall down" in the last line choose a movement*)

Tag or Freeze Tag

Musical Chairs (*fast, slow music*)

