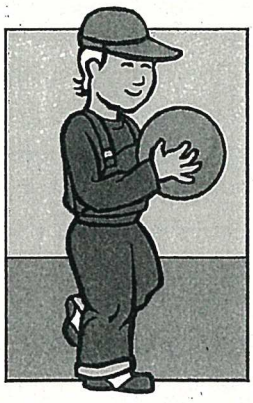
Gross Motor Activities



Good motor planning enables the child to think of an idea, organise and plan a task and carry it out in a co-ordinated and sequenced way.

A child with poor motor planning may find it very difficult to master a new skill and often does not have the ideas or strategies to start, carry out and complete a task. The child may be clumsy and complete his or her work in a messy and haphazard way.

It is important to teach the child strategies to plan and sequence a task. Strategies may include demonstration, breaking down a task, getting the child to verbalise what he should be doing and practice. They would benefit enormously by having opportunities to partake in gross motor activities daily, even if only for 5-10 minutes.

- Encourage use of playground equipment, tricycles, running, jumping etc.
- Carry out movements in slow motion – move fingers to touch shoulder slowly, move arm and leg slowly in circular motion, and move from lying to standing slowly.
- Copy movements – play Simon says, copy body actions and postures e.g. animal walks.
  * Elephant walk – bend forward at the waist, allowing arms to hang down, taking big steps while swaying from side to side.
  * Rabbit hop – placing hands on floor, do deep knee bends and move feet together between hands.
  * Crab walk – crawl backward and forward, face up.
  * Duck walk – walk with hands on knees while doing a deep knee bend.
  * Worm walk – walk with hands and feet on the floor, take small steps first with feet then with hands.
- Sequence movements e.g. jump, clap, jump, clap. Describe the sequence verbally if the child has difficulties.
- Move in space
  e.g. rolling - with arms down at side
  - with arms outstretched above head
  - with arms over head

- holding bean bag in hands
- holding bean bag between knees
- holding bean bag between feet

- Walking forwards. Have the child walk along a curved path marked on the floor to a target goal. The path may be wide or narrow but the narrower the path, the more difficult the task.
- Walking backwards or sideways. A single line requiring tandem walking (heel to toe) is more difficult than a widely spaced walk. A slow pace is more difficult than a running pace. Walking without shoes and socks is more difficult than walking with shoes.
- Hoop games - Hoops of various sizes from the hoola hoop down can be used to develop motor skills. Twist them around the arms, legs and waist; bounce balls in them; toss beanbags into them; step in and out of them, jump in and out of them.
- Obstacle course – vary the speed and control. Invite children to design their own, draw a map of it, then build it and do it.
- Follow my leader with actions – time lag, sequences, sequences of movement etc. to be copied.
- Act out the sequence of activities, e.g. brushing teeth, put on a jacket, tie and shoes, or eat a banana, biscuit then an ice cream cone etc.
- Catching balls in half bottles. Cut away 2 litre bottles to provide a "scoop" for catching.
- Keep a balloon or beach ball up in the air using both hands, for as long as possible.
- Throwing and catching in half-kneeling. Start with bean bags and large balls, then progress to smaller balls.