



Developing Your Child's Gross Motor Skills

Gross Motor skills involve the large muscles of the body and are important for movements such as walking, sitting upright, maintaining balance, coordination, lifting, jumping, reaching and throwing. Your child needs lots of opportunities for physical activity, both for good health and for building their gross motor skills. Each day encourage your child try activities like:

- **Balance:**
 - Balance on one leg. Switch to the other leg.
 - Walk along a line on the sidewalk.
 - Walk along the top of a parking block.
- **Walk in interesting ways**
 - Side step for 5 steps and then switch sides
 - Skip along the sidewalk
 - Walk backwards
- **Move like some different animals**
 - Hop up and down like a bunny
 - Hop like a frog
 - Slither on the grass like a snake
- **Play with balls**
 - Throw and catch a ball
 - Kick a ball and stop a ball
 - Blow up balloons and toss them back and forth using different body parts to keep the balloon in the air (eg. hands, elbow, head).
- **Come to the school and play on playground equipment**
- **The Run-Around:** One person gives directions such as “run to the big tree, touch the bark, and come back,” or “run over to the slide, go down one time, and come back” or “run around the tree three times.” (This is great for gross motor skills and for listening and following directions.)
- **Sidewalk Chalk Simon Says:** Draw large shapes, letters of the alphabet, numbers, etc. using sidewalk chalk. Say “Simon says stand on the yellow square,” or “Simon says sit on the number 5.”
- **Jump the River:** Lay two ropes on the grass and let your child “jump over the river.” You can move the lines together or farther apart, depending on your child's abilities.
- **Toe Pick-Up:** Take off your socks and shoes and pick up small toys or objects with your toes and put them in a bucket. For more challenge, give specific directions eg. pick up the red blocks and place them in the bucket. Now place the blue spoon and put it in the bucket.
- **Mother May I?** The direction giver stands on one side of the room/yard, and the child(ren) stand on the other. The children take turns asking the direction giver, “Mother, may I ____?” (i.e., take 3 giant steps; hop 4 times; take 2 baby steps) The direction giver can answer “Yes you may” or “No you may not but you may...” (ie take 2 skips forward etc). The first person to reach the “mother” gets to give the directions.

