

Gross Motor Development

Gross motor development refers to the controlled movement of the larger muscle groups in the body. Movements are controlled by messages sent to and from the brain. More complex movements require more muscles in the body to work together in a coordinated way.

Gross motor skills include:

- Balance
- Core strength
- Jumping and hopping
- Climbing
- Running and Skipping
- Sitting upright
- Throwing/Catching
- Kicking



Why are they important?

Gross motor skills allow children to navigate their environment. Children require adequate gross motor skills to enable them to participate in many different tasks and activities throughout the day (e.g. a child needs adequate balance to get themselves dressed or adequate core strength to sit and attend for a group time at kinder or school). Children learn how to control the larger muscles of their body before they can control the smaller muscles. Development of gross motor skills is important for the control and dexterity require for fine motor skills.

Signs of reduced gross motor skills

- Clumsiness/ poor balance
- Slow to reach motor milestones
- Difficulties copying large movement or learning new motor skills

Gross Motor Milestones

3
years old

- Walks and runs smoothly, turns corners and able to change direction
- Able to pull or carry a toy while walking
- Climbs in/out, under/over objects without assistance
- Picks up toys from the floor without falling over
- Roll a ball
- Catch a beanbag or ball using body
- Jumps in place with two feet together
- Copies standing on one foot
- Pedals on tricycle
- walks up/down stairs alternating feet
- Walks with a rhythmic arm swing



4
years old

- Walks down stairs using handrail and alternating feet
- Stands on one foot momentarily
- Kicks ball forward
- Throws a ball overarm
- Catches a ball that has been bounced
- Catches a ball in arms or using body
- Runs around obstacles with control
- Able to walk on a line
- Able to hop on one foot
- Walking on tip toes
- Jumps two feet together
- Jumps off a step and lands with two feet together



5
years old

- Stands on one foot for 5+ seconds
- 5 hops on one leg
- Traps a ball under leg
- Able to walk up and down stairs alternating feet
- Walks heel-toe along a line
- Able to walk backwards
- Jumps forward 10 times without falling
- Skips forwards after demonstration
- Hangs from bar for at least 5 seconds
- Steps forward on one leg when throwing a ball
- Catches a tennis ball using hands only
- Riding a bike with training wheels



Gross motor activities for Kinder at home:

These activities can be done indoors or outdoors depending on the space you have. Any household items you may have can be used.

- Balloon Tennis.
- Tightrope Walking.
- Scavenger Hunt.
- Egg and spoon races.
- Animal Walks.
- Simon Says.
- Hopscotch.
- Balancing bean bag/ball/object on head and walking through the house.
- Twister.



- Wheelbarrow walks.
- Bike/Scooter.
- Skipping Rope.
- Musical Statues.
- Activities with balls
 - Kicking a soccer ball or football
 - Bean bag toss into basket
 - Throwing/rolling a ball with partner or against wall
- Songs with movement
 - The Hokey Pokey
 - Heads, shoulder, knees and toes
 - If your happy and you know it
 - Row, row, row your boat
 - The wheels on the bus
 - Tickle rain
 - Open shut them

What might you need?

- Cushions, pillows, blankets, chairs, tables, socks, basket/box
- Any kind of ball
- Access to songs/music
- Floor space
- Paper/pencils/chalk
- Balloons
- Masking tape



- Animal Walks
 - Move like a bear (walk on all fours)
 - Move like a kangaroo (take big leaps with arms in front of chest)
 - Move like an elephant (with heavy stomping)
 - Move like a penguin (waddle with ankles close together and arms pinned to sides)
- Obstacle Courses.
 - Set up a range of obstacles in the house that children must navigate. Use cushions, pillows, blankets, chairs, tables, baskets, boxes, socks, tape, bags, balls, whatever you can find.
 - For example, children must balance on a path of pillows (x3), crawl under the table, walk like a bear to the basket, toss a pair of socks into a box, hop around the couch, weave in between chairs (x4) and do 5 star jumps.
 - Can be done indoors or outdoors depending on space, encourage children to help set up and pack up.