

Parenting Together



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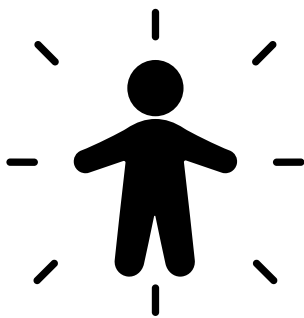
What are gross motor skills?

Gross motor skills, also known as large motor skills, are movements that involve large muscle groups like arms, legs, and trunk, to move the body. These skills are often expected to develop through normal, day-to-day activities throughout childhood. However, purposeful practice of gross motor skills at home can strengthen your child's growth and give more insight into your child's skills and needs. Here are some important facts parents and caregivers should understand about gross motor skills and activities to try at home.

Throughout childhood, skills tend to build from small acts to more complex tasks. Skill development is also influenced by activity preference, the environment, and the physical abilities of the person. Common milestones in child development are:

- Holding up the head and rolling over
- Reaching, bending over, and balancing
- Crawling and standing
- Walking, running, jumping, and skipping

Gross motor skills are also related to two important body senses: proprioception, or the sense of what's going on outside of your body, and interoception, or the sense of what's going inside your body. A wide variety of gross motor experiences throughout life will positively impact these body senses, which increases the child's confidence, independence, and self-regulation.



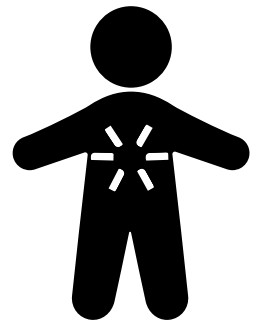
Proprioception

Examples of Proprioception

- Knowing how far away something is
- Knowing how much strength to use to pick up an object
- Avoiding bumping into things or people

Examples of Interoception

- Knowing when you are hungry or tired
- Knowing when you need to use the toilet
- Sensing body reactions to emotions, like a faster heart rate



Interoception

Finally, there are people that can help if you have questions or concerns about your child's gross motor development. Medical professionals like primary care doctors, physical therapists, or occupational therapists can help. Additionally, early childhood teachers and care providers are often able to continue skill practice or offer new activity suggestions. Tools like the CDC's Milestone Tracker App (available in English and Spanish) can also help.

There are many fun, simple ways to practice gross motor skills - here are some ideas to try at home!

Ideas to Try At Home



0 to 1 Year Old

- During tummy time, look at books or other interesting objects to encourage the child to hold their head up or push their bodies up
- Provide different textures and surfaces to move on, such as pillows or a blanket
- Standing and/or walking while holding something in their arms

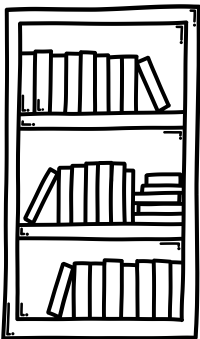
1 to 3 Years Old

- Balls, bubbles, or other light objects that the child can throw, reach for, or chase
- Balance on or hop over some sort of mark on the ground, such as a piece of tape or line in the flooring.
- Drumming with hands together and alternating hands



4 to 6 Years Old

- Obstacle courses or activities like yoga that require coordination of arms, legs, and balance
- Movement games like Simon Says, Red Light Green Light, and Dance and Freeze that requires starting and stopping complex movements
- Independent play with things like hula hoops, skipping ropes, or hopscotch

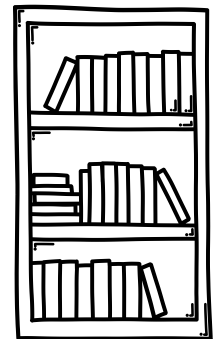


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