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Children's Occupational Therapy Department

Motor Co-Ordination Activities for Pre-School & Reception Children

Combine the Senses

Mastering gross motor skills involves the sensory systems as well as the motor system. Think of ways to include rhythm, vision and balance into games. For example, standing on a cushion, singing a song and playing catch with beanbags coordinated with the beat involves many of the senses.



Move through Space

Tunnels, ladders, swings and slides all provide stimulation of both the visual and vestibular systems (the balance center in your inner ear). These sensory systems have a huge impact on gross motor skills.

Repeat, Repeat Repeat

Frequent practice is needed to learn a skill.



Let The Fun Begin

Sometimes we get so caught up in the practice and the skill that we forget to make it fun. But research on learning has revealed that motivation is an important factor. You can create a game with a holiday theme or let your child develop the activity. Then let the fun begin!



Practice Problem Solving

When our children are having difficulty with a task, our tendency is to help them out with a solution. But again, our research on learning shows that if we help the child to problem solve a different strategy, then they learn the task much better. The next time your child isn't successful with a skill ask them how they think they could practice.

Emotions Rule

We cannot expect someone to be able to learn a new skill unless they are calm and emotionally organized. This is what therapists call the "*just right state*". Parents often know exactly what their child needs in order to be in this space. Deep pressure, a crunchy snack, their favourite music; all create the internal environment that call allow learning to occur. Before you begin gross motor activity, consider what your child needs to be in the "*just right state*" to learn.

Your child's balance and co-ordination skills are best improved as part of their normal play activities as they find this Fun and rewarding, thus encouraging them to use their skills in new ways. Below are good activities.

- Kicking and catching a ball
- Getting your child to pretend to be different things so he practices lots of spatial movement. Such as: A snowflake with arms out to the side, the Wind, A monster, a snake, a giant.
- One foot Fun



Balance

Encourage balancing skills by setting an obstacle course with boxes about 12-20 cm high, a ladder lying on the floor, sticks and any other similar obstacles. Let the child follow the course as he steps in and out of boxes, on and off platform and in between rungs of ladder.

Encourage balancing along a 10 cm wide board or beam (Or similar) Provide minimal assistance with one hand and then one finger. Have child hold on to hoop and pretend to drive a car, or go along beam in different ways



Jumping

Practicing jumping with 2 feet together, your child can be a Kangaroo, also pretend to be frog or other animal.

- Jump from lily pad to lily pad being frogs; using squares of green paper/chalk circles
- Jump across the river. Lay rope on floor in a U-Shape. Have it narrow at one end and encourage jumping across
- Olympic Jumping: have your child jump alongside a metre stick to see how far they can jump

