

## TIPS FOR PARENTS

# GROSS MOTOR SKILLS



Gross Motor Skills include the movement and co-ordination of the large muscle groups in our bodies—arms, legs and torso which are used when walking, jumping, kicking, sitting upright, lifting and throwing a ball. Giving your child lots of opportunities to develop their Gross Motor Skills will help them gain strength and confidence in their body and develop the core strength needed to develop fine motor skills. Gross Motor Skills are important for everyday activities such as having enough body strength to sit at a desk and can affect their fine motor skills such as writing, drawing and cutting.

### TOP TIPS

- \* Regular Practice (5 to 10 minutes each day) will help your child improve their skills.
- \* Encourage your child by giving lots of praise
- \* and encouragement
- \* Start easy and gradually make tasks more difficult
- \* Make it FUN!

### Improve your child's core stability and strength

Reduce the amount of time your child spends sitting—get them up and moving about as much as possible

Encourage your child to use a variety of positions when playing—lying on their tummy, on their side, kneeling, standing at the table

Play fun games that involve them putting weight on their hands like walking and crawling like animals—rabbit, frogs, spiders, crabs etc

Get your child to crawl on the ground and through tunnels or chairs - play slithering like a snake!

Any push/pull activities—moving furniture around a room, climbing on playground equipment - swinging, pushing and pulling.

Give you child lots of practice walking over uneven or unsteady ground—green spaces and forests are good for this

Obstacles—begin with walking over items, once they have mastered then bring the items closing together. Get you child to step into and out of a box/ hula hoop/basket or tyre

Create an obstacle course which include some balance—eg walk along a piece of string

Play Freeze or Musical statues will test their balance and their body strength. Make the game more difficult by getting them to freeze for longer periods, this will help increase focus and concentration too.

Play Animal Yoga—where they have to stretch up on tiptoes as tall as a giraffe, balance as a one legged flamingo



### Improve your child's balance



Develop your child's strength



Position your child's toys to encourage them to squat to lift and play and encourage your child to carry, lift, push and pull items which will develop their strength.

Fill up boxes with items so that they are more challenging for your child to lift, pull and push. If available get your child to push and pull wheelbarrow or other large toys.

Encourage your child to step and down low steps or the pavement kerb. Begin with low steps at first and increase. Encourage your child to use their hands at first if needed.

Provide lots of opportunities for running, dancing, jumping

Bilateral Integration (using both sides of the body together)



Play 'Simon Says' using postures that cross the mid-line, so get your child to touch alternative knees, ears, toes.

Play knee windmills—touch left hand with right hand and stand up straight, touch right knee with left hand and stand up straight—repeat. Then play but stretch to the foot.

Get your child to wash large toys, walls or dust and wipe tables. Encourage your child to use both hands, moving from side to side, up and down and across.

Using play dough get your child to use both hands to roll the dough flat. Place items away from the child, so they are having to reach across

Pillow fights—children hold the pillow with both hands and this will naturally encourage them to move their arms across their body when trying to reach their opponent.

Other games such as marching on the spot and lift knees high, and Jumping Jacks

## BODY AWARENESS

Children with poor body awareness will often bump into things and/or knock items over, they often have difficulties judging the space between their body and oth-

Simon Says—start with easy directions—hands on head or hands on ears. Gradually make the directions more difficult as your child's skills develop eg right hand on right shoulder etc

Body Outlines—get your child to lie on a large piece of paper or on the path. Take a pencil or chalk and draw around their body. Name each body part for your child.

Let your child crawl under things like a table or chair, or through tunnels or large open boxes. Encourage your child to crawl, walk over a pile of cushions/pillow

Set up an obstacle course for your child, as you child to talk about how they will move through the items before they begin.

Talk about direction and movement, describe what the child is doing and allow them to describe back to you

## MOTOR PLANNING

Helps your child figure out how to approach new tasks

Give your child a lot of clear visual demonstrations when learning new skills.

Help them break down task into easy steps and help them find solutions to difficult tasks

Pretend the floor is lava and get your child to figure out how to cross from one area to another.

Have a dance off—get your child to create a fun move or dance that your child has to copy. Put on their favourite music to make it more fun.

Play a game where you each take turns of thinking of different ways to use items around the house, eg a fork—eating, brushing hair, combing the dog—make it fun!

Have a treasure hunt, hide things around the house, - you could even draw a treasure map.

Use music and rhymes to help children organise their movements.

