



## Physical Development – Developing Gross Motor Skills

Gross motor skills are important as they enable children to perform every day functions, such as walking and running, develop skills such as climbing as well as sporting skills (e.g. catching, throwing and hitting a ball with a bat).

Gross motor abilities also have an influence on other everyday functions. For example, a child's ability to maintain upper body strength will affect their ability to participate in fine motor skills (e.g. writing, drawing and cutting). Poor development of gross motor skills may also impact on your child's endurance to cope with a full day of school.

### Some of the things we enjoy at Kindergarten which promote the development of gross motor skills...

- Using the adventure playground for climbing and balancing
- Using scarves and streamers to develop gross motor skills in the upper body
- Pilates (On a Monday morning) encourages the children to develop whole body strength through a range of stretching and balancing activities
- Dancing and group exercise promotes flexibility, range of motion, physical strength and stamina
- Dough disco – a fun activity which combines the use of play dough with a series of hand and finger exercises designed to develop children's fine and gross motor dexterity and hand-eye coordination
- Using equipment to encourage hand-eye coordination including bats, balls, footballs, basketball hoops, beanbags etc.
- Parachute games strengthen muscles in the upper body
- Obstacle courses encourage the children to move in a variety of ways

### Links to the Early Years Foundation Stage...

Preschool aged children are encouraged to achieve the following outcomes linked to their gross motor development:

- Move freely and with pleasure and confidence in a range of ways, such as slithering, shuffling, rolling, crawling, walking, running, jumping, skipping, sliding and hopping.
- Run skilfully and negotiates space successfully, adjusting speed or direction to avoid obstacles.
- Stand momentarily on one foot when shown.
- Catch a large ball.
- Draw lines and circles using gross motor movements.
- Jump off an object and land appropriately.
- Travel with confidence and skill around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment.
- Show increasing control over an object in pushing, patting, throwing, catching or kicking it.

### How you can help your child's gross motor development at home...

- Provide plenty of opportunities to use a range of equipment which promotes gross motor skills such as bats and balls.
- Challenge your child – if they find it easy to catch a large ball try a small ball or move further back when throwing or catching.
- Encourage your child to sometimes use their weaker arm and leg to build up gross motor strength on both sides of the body.