

Gross Motor Skills

Gross motor skills refers to large movement patterns involving the whole body such as walking, running, jumping, hopping. These skills develop from birth, e.g. rolling, crawling, and become more complex e.g. swimming, bike riding and participating in sports. Effective gross motor skills are important for developing fine motor skills. Difficulties in this area might include; poor co-ordination, low muscle tone, movements that lack fluency which may impact upon ball skills and balance.

General Guidelines

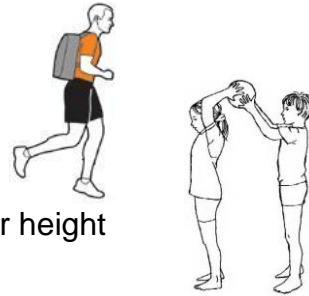
- Consider physical requirements of the task.
- Need to develop self confidence.
- Many young people with co-ordination difficulties may find PE, in particular team games, challenging – provide alternative choice when possible.
- Peer support e.g. buddy system for carrying dining tray or transporting equipment between classes.
- Consider Health and Safety e.g. in PE, in stairwells during change over between lessons (can the young person leave/arrive at class early to avoid peak rush times).
- Encourage attendance at groups, youth clubs etc. e.g. Tae Kwondo, swimming etc.
- Be aware that fatigue and tolerance levels may be considerably lower in comparison to peers – consider adapting and grading activities where possible
- Give alternative role e.g. time keeper, score keeper etc.
- Accommodate without being obvious, focus on areas of success.

Muscle Tone

Our ability to move is dependent on our muscle tone. When muscle tone is low, the muscle is more relaxed and the young person may appear floppy. Difficulties in this area may include using increased effort to achieve movement; it can affect their ability to control and co-ordinate movement, the young person may tire easily and quickly after minimal activity, leaning over desk, slouching in their seat.

Muscle Tone Activities

- Sitting back to back with a partner pushing up to stand
- Any activity against resistance e.g. tug-of war, carrying heavy books / bags and swimming
- Different ways of moving – running, air cycling, star jumps, jumping, hopping
- Passing balls over head using different sizes and weights of balls
- Volley ball style games with arm above shoulder height
- Climbing activities



Balance

Refers to one of our senses that helps us to maintain stability for function. Difficulties in this area may include poor saving reactions, poor balance, poor posture. This can often be seen through difficulties in activities such as riding a bike, participating in team games or gymnastics at school or even just sitting still.

Balance Activities

- Throwing and catching a ball/bean bag whilst standing in a hoop
- Walking on uneven surface e.g. stepping stones, gym mats
- High kneeling tug-of-war – pushing/pulling a partner
- Standing on one leg for as long as possible
- Hopping – on the spot, along a line, side-to-side, following a given sequence
- Standing on an uneven surface e.g. wobble board, throwing/catching a ball, hitting a balloon
- Yoga positions



Proprioception

Refers to the sensation received from the muscles and joints, which helps us to be aware of where our body parts are in space. Difficulties in this area may include body and spatial awareness, judging force, e.g. when throwing a ball, kicking a ball and general difficulties in gross and fine motor skills.

Proprioceptive Activities

- Jumping on a trampoline
- Walk/chair/floor push ups
- Air chair – press back against wall, bend legs and

- pretend to be sitting on a chair
- Helping round house e.g. Hoover, making bed, gardening
- 10-pin Bowling
- Free weights – Ask your local gym for advice
- Baking



Joint Instability

Refers to the increased movements around joints. It can occur at any joint in the body and can affect a young person's fluency of movement and co-ordination making them appear awkward. Difficulties can also include poor body awareness, tiring easily and complaining of pain around the joint.

Joint Instability Activities

- Theraputty / clay
- Push ups on wall, floor and chair
- Press ups
- Sit ups
- Commando crawling
- Theraband
- Jogging on the spot – try to keep knees high
- Sports: swimming, riding bike, running, horse riding, ice skating, gymnastics, basketball
- Crawling against resistance (at knees, hips, shoulders)

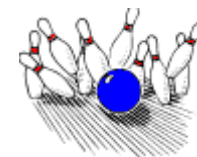
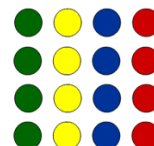


Motor Planning

Refers to the ability to organise movement including: Forming the idea and knowing what to do, organising the sequence of movements involved in task and carrying out the planned movements smoothly.

Motor Planning Activities

- Bouncing ball around cones (can be graded, e.g. timed)
- Standing still aiming at a moving target e.g. dodge ball
- Dart board / target games
- Construction games e.g. Lego
- Games like Twister
- Bat and Ball Games
- 10-pin Bowling
- Bouncing ball – try using different weights or sizes. Begin by standing on the spot and can be made more complex by bouncing the ball around cones



Bilateral Integration

Refers to the ability to co-ordinate both sides of the body together. Your dominant hand or leg leads the activity and the other supports, this is important for functional everyday tasks such as dressing, cutlery, buttons, handwriting.

Bilateral integration Activities

- Swimming
- Star jumps
- Cycling
- Bat and Ball Games
- Skipping with rope
- Twister
- Gymnastics
- Combining movements (e.g. running to hop, running to jump)

