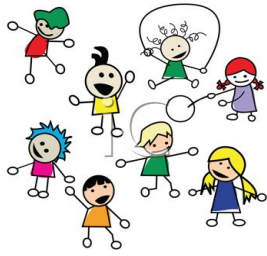


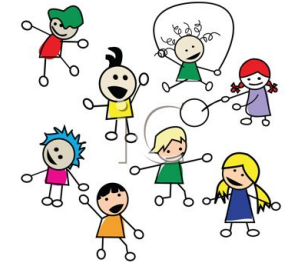
# Motor Skills Activity Programme



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## Fun gross motor skill activities






### What are gross motor skills?



Gross motor skills are the foundation for all movement and include the larger movements of arms, legs, feet, or the entire body such as running, jumping and ball activities. They enable children to explore their environment, participate in learning opportunities and form the basis for all physical activity.

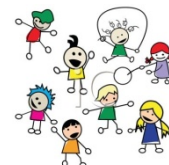
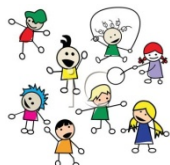
Gross motor skills are developed throughout childhood and adolescence, typically through regular active play. As with all areas of child development, children develop these skills at different rates and some require more support than others.





This activity programme provides suggested fun activities to help develop your child's gross motor skills. Have fun trying some of the following activities. Encourage your child to try some of the challenges and help them to find the right level for them.

Balance	
Activity	Challenges
<p><b>Walk along a line.</b> Ask your child to walk along a line (you can use chalk or tape to mark the line) pretending it is a tightrope.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many steps can they take along the line before losing their balance?</li> <li>• Can your child keep their balance while walking on their tip toes?</li> <li>• Can they keep their balance while heel-toe walking, (leaving no space between their heel and toe as they step forwards)?</li> <li>• Can your child keep their balance while walking along low raised surface e.g. walls, fallen trees, trim trails (with supervision/support if required)?</li> </ul> 
<p><b>Balancing on one leg.</b> Ask your child to try balancing, standing on one leg holding on for support if required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long can they hold a balance for? For how long can they balance without holding on?</li> <li>• Can they balance standing on one foot with the other foot on a step or a ball?</li> <li>• Can they do it with their eyes closed?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Beanbag balance.</b> Place a beanbag on your child's head or arm and ask them to move around without it falling off.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can they walk/turn around/touch the ground and stand up without it falling off?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stepping stones.</b> Encourage your child to play stepping stones using mats/cushions/stones.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vary the distances, size and directions of the stepping targets. How far apart can you make the targets and your child still keep their balance?</li> </ul> 
<p><b>Movement games.</b> Play games that involve stopping, starting and changing direction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can your child circle or zig zag around a row of marker cones or trees?</li> <li>• Can they control their movement if you ask them to stop or change direction suddenly?</li> <li>• Can your child control their movement running down a slope?</li> </ul> 

## Jumping, hopping and skipping skills

Activities	Challenges
<p><b>Jumping games.</b> Encourage your child to play jumping games. Make sure your child lands with both feet at the same time.</p>	<p>Can your child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Jump over a line? How far can they jump?</li> <li>❖ Jump off a bottom step or a low wall? Can they keep their balance as they land?</li> <li>❖ Jump forwards, backwards to the side?</li> </ul> 
<p><b>Star jumps.</b> Ask your child to try star jump legs? (Jump feet out and in). Your child may benefit from using mats as markers.</p>	<p>Can they add in star jump arms?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ How many can they do in a row without losing co-ordination?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hopping.</b> Can your child hop holding on to a wall/table? Encourage your child to push off and land from the ball of their foot. Ask them to practise hopping on both the left and the right leg.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can they hop without holding on?</li> <li>• Hopping forward, how many hops can they manage?</li> <li>• Can they hop backwards, sideways?</li> <li>• Can they play Hop Scotch (you can try chalking out the squares) Try varying the size of the squares to make it harder.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Skipping.</b> Can your child travel forward while they skip? You can help break the skill down by asking them to take a step and hop, then take a step and hop on the other leg)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can they skip in different directions and around objects?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rope skipping.</b> Can be a difficult skill to master. Try breaking it down as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With a partner, gently swing a long rope backwards and forwards. Ask your child to try jumping over the rope with their feet together</li> <li>• With a partner, swing the rope over your child's head. Can they jump over the rope after it turned over their head?</li> <li>• Using a shorter rope, encourage your child to try turning the rope over their own head (to check if the skipping rope is the correct length for them, ask them to hold both handles and stand in the middle of the rope with both feet. If the rope is the correct length it will come up to just under the top of their arm).</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many jumps can they manage without their feet catching the rope?</li> <li>• How many times can you turn the rope without their feet catching the rope?</li> <li>• Can your child turn the rope themselves and then step over the it?</li> <li>• Can they jump over the rope as they turn it themselves?</li> </ul>



<b>Ball skills</b>	
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
<b>Balloon volleyball.</b> Use a balloon to play volleyball with your child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For how long can they keep it in the air?</li> </ul>  It can be good to use a balloon to introduce your child to ball skills as it is soft and moves slowly.
<b>Rolling a ball.</b> Roll large ball back and forth to your child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many times can your child roll in a set amount of time?</li> <li>Try again but move further apart. Can your child progress to a small ball?</li> <li>Can your child knock down skittles (you can use plastic bottles filled with a small amount of sand or rice). How many skittles can they knock down? How far away can they go from the skittles and still knock them down?</li> <li>Your child can also use the skittles as goals. How narrow can they make the goals and still score?</li> </ul>
<b>Throwing to a target.</b> Ask your child to throw a ball or beanbag into a basket/hula hoop. Encourage them to think about how hard and in what direction they need to throw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many times can they hit the target?</li> <li>Can they make the target smaller and still score?</li> <li>How far back from the target can they still score?</li> </ul>
<b>Throwing and catching</b> Ask your child to throw a balloon/ball/beanbag up into the air and catch it again? Encourage your child to catch it in their hands away from their body.  Throw a balloon/ball/beanbag back and forth with your child.	 Make the challenge the right level by changing the ball used, larger balls are easier to catch than small balls, squashy easier than firm. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How high can they throw it up and still catch it?</li> <li>Can they clap/turn around/jump or kneel down before catching?</li> <li>How many catches can they do before it drops?</li> <li>Can your child still throw and catch if you keep moving position?</li> </ul>
<b>Bouncing and catching.</b> Ask your child to bounce a balloon/ball and catch it. Encourage them to bounce the ball in front of their feet and think about how hard they need to bounce the ball.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can your child bounce and catch a ball back and forth to you?</li> <li>Can they throw a balloon/ball against wall and catch?</li> </ul>  A light football is ideal to practice with. Make sure it is blown up enough to bounce fairly easily.
<b>Football.</b> Try kicking back and forth to your child.   A light football may be easier to control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can they stop the ball under one foot when it comes to them?</li> <li>Can they kick a ball into a goal? How far can they step back from the goal and still score? If you narrow the size of the goals, how many goals can they score?</li> <li>Can you kick a ball between you and your child while one of you moves around slowly and then a bit faster?</li> </ul>
<b>Bat and ball games.</b> Encourage your child to think about how hard and in what direction they need to hit the ball.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you roll a ball to your child can they trap it against the ground with a racket?</li> <li>Can they play tennis with a balloon, progressing to soft sponge ball, then tennis ball?</li> </ul>

## Muscle Strength

Children with motor skill difficulties sometimes have weakness of the muscles that help with postural control. This lack of a stable base can make it more difficult for children to co-ordinate gross and fine motor activities. Good strength is also required to generate the power needed for gross motor activities such as throwing and jumping. By encouraging your child to try some of the following activities you can provide them with the opportunity to develop their strength and stability.



Always think safety first. Provide your child with supervision/support if required. Do not continue with any activity where your child is experiencing pain.

### Participation in sport

Encourage your child to be physically active. Sports which help strengthen muscles include swimming, cycling, martial arts, tennis and gymnastics.

### Active play



Children also develop their strength and stability through active play that involves climbing, pulling, clambering and swinging movements. Soft play venues and playground equipment including climbing frames, rope ladders, monkey bars and swings allow children to carry out these movements through play.



As with all activities you do with your child on a daily basis, please always use your judgment to decide whether the activity is safe for your child.

Movements that involve weight bearing through the arms such as crawling help develop the strength around the shoulder. Movements which help to strengthen the legs include getting on and off the floor, up and down steps and squatting and rising. Your child may enjoy trying some of these movements in an obstacle course. An example course could be to crawl through a tunnel, stand up and step over a low step, commando crawl under a low table, stand back up then squat to pick up a beanbag and throw to a target.

### Postural control in sitting

Having good strength in sitting is particularly important for children to give them a stable base to work from in the classroom. Encourage your child to try the following activity to develop postural control in sitting.

- **Pass a ball in sitting.** With your child sitting in a chair, encourage them to sit up tall. Stand behind them and ask them to pass a ball back and forth to you overhead and to the side.



Try to ensure your child maintains an upright sitting position, with their feet flat on the floor. Place a step under your child's feet if they cannot touch the ground.





## Statues

Below is a table with different weight-bearing positions. Encouraging your child to try to get into and hold some of these positions can challenge their strength and stability.

Statues		
Name	Description	Posture picture
High kneeling	Kneeling with bottom up away from heels (hips and back straight)	
½ high kneeling	Kneeling as in high kneeling, then bring one leg forwards and place the foot on the ground so that the foot is under the knee and knee in line with hip.	
Crawl position arm lift	Crawling position (hands under shoulders, knees under hips, back straight), lift one arm forward and up. Keep back straight and shoulders down away from ears.	
Crawl position leg lift	Crawling position (hands under shoulders, knees under hips, back straight), straighten one leg out behind and lift off the ground. Keep back straight.	
Superman	Lying on front, lift arms and head off the ground as if 'flying like superman'. If this is too difficult, try with a cushion under the chest.	
Curl up into a ball	Lying on back, curl up into a ball bringing head to knees. Try not to roll to the side.	
Forwards on hands and feet	Leaning forward on hands, lift bottom into the air	

Your child may be motivated to try the positions through some of the following games.

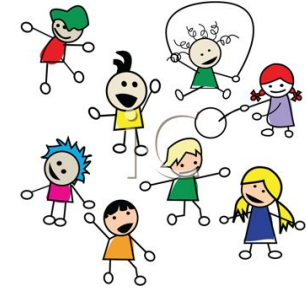
- **Throw to target** In the high kneeling, ½ high kneeling or crawl with arm lift positions, ask your child to maintain their posture and try throwing to a target.
- **Balloon volleyball** In high kneeling or ½ high kneeling positions can your child maintain their posture and play a game of tapping a balloon back and forth?
- **Rolling a ball** In the superman position, can your child roll a ball back and forth?
- **Games with movement up and down from the floor** for example standing up to burst bubbles or catch a balloon. Encourage your child to stand up through ½ high kneeling.
- **Musical statues.** When the music stops shout out one of the statues in the table below. Ask your child to 'freeze' in this position. Can they make up their own statue? Can they maintain their statue while you gently push against them?
- **Character game.** Younger children may be more motivated by a 'character' game. Ask your child to think up characters for each position for example on an animal theme, high kneeling could be a meercat, forward on hands and feet could be a bear. Can they make up their own ideas? As you call out each 'character' ask your child get into and hold their chosen position.



Try to ensure your child does not hold their breath while holding any of the positions. With the statues that involve balancing on one side of the body, remember to encourage your child to try on both right and left sides.



## Fine motor skill activities



Hand Skills that are required to do daily tasks include: using two hands together; manipulating small objects; using a variety of grasps; having strong enough hands and being able to judge the pressure needed to complete a task. Hand- eye co-ordination and being able to plan and organise tasks are also important skills.

### Benefits of improving hand function

- Improve classroom functioning - pencil/scissor skills, arts and crafts
- Better ability to play with their friends through toys and games
- To become more independent in self care tasks i.e. dressing (buttons, fastenings, laces), using cutlery, helping around the house
- The ability to access a wider variety of hobbies and play

Children need encouragement to choose activities involving skills they find difficult therefore it is essential that adults include these in their daily lives.

### Fine Motor Activities

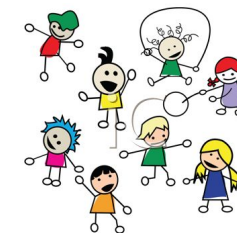
Included are some ideas of play activities and daily tasks that will encourage the development of your child's hand skills. It gives examples of how to grade activities to achieve a challenge that is "Just Right" for them.



### Things to think about

- Make sure your child is in a good sitting position, preferably sitting at a table with feet flat on the floor.
- Carry out these tasks in an environment free from distractions to encourage concentration.
- Carry out a selection of the activities regularly throughout the week, if possible daily.

## Fine Motor Activities



It can be useful to conduct hand strength activities prior to other fine motor activities to wake hands up and prepare them for the activity

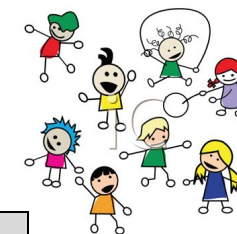
Hand strength		
Easy	Medium	Hard
Play Doh	Theraputty Soft	Theraputty Medium
Large Tweezers/Tongs	Clothes Pegs	Tweezers
Squeezy Toys	Stress Ball	Spray Bottles
Scrunching Paper	Tearing paper	Tearing Card
Squeezing Sponge	Wringing Cloths	Opening Jars/Containers

Games/Puzzles		
Easy	Medium	Hard
Connect 4	Buck-a-Roo	Operation
Pop Up Pirate	Penguin Pile Up	Mouse Trap
Monkey Business	Ker Plunk	Jenga
Snap	Tiddly Winks	Pick up Sticks
Hungry Hippo	Speedy Fingers	Tricky Fingers
Crocodile Dentist	Playing Cards	Battle Ships
Frustration	Guess Who	Monopoly
Dominoes	Magic Tricks	Time Shock
Jigsaw Puzzle – Large Pieces	Jigsaw Puzzles – small pieces	3-D Jigsaw Puzzles
Drawing Trails	Dot-to-Dot	



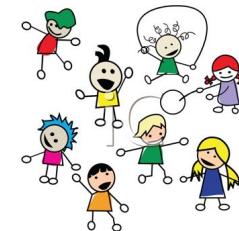
Remember to let you child set the game up/put it away to incorporate further fine motor practice





Arts & Crafts		
Easy	Medium	Hard
Threading beads (large)	Threading Cards	Threading beads (small)
Kinetic Sand	Making Play Doh/Salt Doh	Loom Bands
Basic Cutting out	Cardboard Models/Junk Modelling	Theraputty
Ink Stamp Pad	Stencils	Hamma Beads
Paper Collage	Paper Aeroplanes	Basic knitting/sewing
Sticker Pictures	Painting within lines	
Mosaic Pictures	Colouring in more detailed pictures within lines	
Painting Magic		
Colouring in		

Construction		
Easy	Medium	Hard
Megablox/Duplo	Lego basic large blocks – free play	Lego – completing a set
Sticklebricks	K,nex	Airfix Models
Large building blocks	Peg boards	Meccano
Brio style train tracks	Race Tracks e.g. Hot Wheels	Scalextric
Marble Run	Magnetic building blocks	Magnetic building shapes



**ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONAL SKILLS**

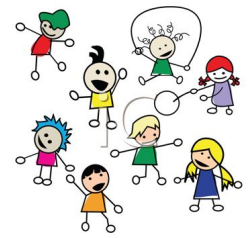







Try and attempt some of these activities every day. Build them into your daily routine a little at a time, increasing your child's independence as you Go.

When conducting dressing activities be mindful of when you attempt to carry them out. Weekends or when getting ready for bed would be more beneficial than first thing in the morning when everyone is in a hurry to get ready.

Dressing Skills		
Easy	Medium	Hard
Large buttons	Small buttons	Buttons on jeans
Pulling zip up/down	Engaging Zip	School tie
Velcro Shoes	Socks	Shoe laces
T-shirt	Gloves	Tights
Poppers	Buckles/belt	


Household/Garden tasks		
Easy	Medium	Hard
Put clothes in washing basket	Making Bed	Tidying room
Sharpening pencils	Organising own schoolbag	Covering own jotters
Setting table	Dusting	Hoovering
Loading dishwasher	Washing dishes	Drying dishes
Watering plants	Planting/digging	Maintaining own patch of garden/own plants



Kitchen tasks		
Easy	Medium	Hard
Spooning	Using Knife& Fork 	Chopping 
Stirring	Whisking	Piping
Pouring	Measuring	Planning & preparing simple snack
Opening jars/packets	Cutting packets open 	Using kitchen appliances e.g. tin opener 
Spreading	Cracking eggs	Grating 
Kneading	Rolling/using cutters	

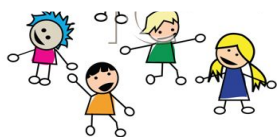


These activities are great fun and will help your child towards independence in planning and preparing snacks/meals

 **As with all activities that you do with your children on a daily basis please always use your judgment to decide whether the activity is safe for your child. NHS Forth Valley cannot take responsibility for incidents that occur in the carrying out of these activities.**

## Useful links and Resources

- <https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/>
- <http://therapystreetforkids.com/SelfHelp.html>
- <http://therapyfunzone.net/blog/ot/fine-motor-skills/>
- <http://www.pinterest.com>
- <http://www.growinghandsonkids.com>
- [www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/sport/](http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/sport/)
- [www.activeforlife.com/activities/](http://www.activeforlife.com/activities/)
- [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/get-active/activity](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/get-active/activity)
- [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/213739/dh\\_128144.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213739/dh_128144.pdf)
- [www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-physical-activity-guidelines](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-physical-activity-guidelines) factsheets on physical activity guidelines for children.
- [www.nhs.uk/livewell/fitness/pages/physical-activity-guidelines-for-children.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/fitness/pages/physical-activity-guidelines-for-children.aspx)



**Motor skills** are a foundation on which learning is built. As with all learning children learn at different speeds and need different amounts of support and practice. Children gain confidence as they learn new skills.

### What can I do to help my child develop their motor skills?

- **Frequent practice** - Offer your child regular opportunity to practice their motor skills through active play, physical activity and sporting opportunities. Encourage your child to try some of the suggested activities included in this information sheet.
- **Make the practice fun** and offer lots of specific praise. Stop when your child is tiring or losing motivation.
- **Make the practice purposeful.** Discuss with your child what skills they would like to develop so they are motivated to practice. Help set goals/challenges related to those specific skills. Can they beat their personal best?
- **Just right challenge.** Try to find the level for your child where they are being challenged, but also managing to succeed and progress, allowing them to gain confidence in their motor skills. When your child has mastered the movement they have been working on, encourage them to set new achievable goals progressing on to the next level.
- **Motor learning.** You can support your child by encouraging them to think about how they can break down a skill into manageable steps. You can also help by ensuring that they are allowed the time they need to plan their movements and to practice new skills frequently. Once your child has learned a new skill (i.e. catching a ball) help them to consolidate the skill by encouraging them to practice in different contexts ( i.e. with a different ball, catching while moving, as part of a team game)
- **Lead by example** - Make active choices for your family.
- **Always think safety first!** Please ensure that activities that you choose are safe and appropriate for your child's ability and understanding.

### Key



Activities with particular risk are indicated by the symbol.



Tips for Success, advice on how to carry out tasks

