



DO and DISCOVER

Fun activities to develop
physical skills in the early years



Introduction

Between the ages of three and six children develop fundamental movement skills which are the building blocks that enable them to progress and develop a full range of skills. For example, by six years of age, a normally developing child will be able to run, jump, hop, skip, climb, throw, catch, kick, strike, manipulate, write and draw. This ability to learn movement competence creates the essential nerve cell networks which are the very essence of the learning process. However, many early years practitioners in Bridgend County Borough Council are reporting that more children appear to be entering nurseries and schools without the physical skills for large motor and fine motor play. There may be many reasons for this; for example, the introduction of computerised games, TV, small gardens, busy streets and the constant supervision of children all make it hard for the rough-and-tumble type of play to take place.

In 2005, the Welsh Assembly Government in its Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity stated its commitment to the process of personal development and the acquisition of physical literacy for young children. Setting a high level of activities that encourage body awareness or movement competence will provide the opportunity for children to develop physical literacy alongside their literacy and numeracy skills. Initially this might

include the opportunity for children to experience a sense of balance and relaxation and to develop the ability to move with control, precision and clarity. It is important for children to develop these fundamental movement skills and sport skills as they form the foundation for more complex skills later on. These more complex skills are the movements used to participate in leisure and recreational activities and which lead to a healthy and active life.

The Foundation Phase (due to be fully implemented in Wales by 2008) recognises the need for the development of these physical skills in early years' settings, alongside other key learning areas. However, while this is very positive, physical skills training and knowledge is at best patchy and 'many teachers feel they lack the knowledge to provide the right support and environment that will enhance movement education and PE provision' (Brooks, Y, 'Master Class in Movement', Times Educational Supplement, 2004).

This pack supports the 'physical development' area of learning in the 'Draft framework for Children's Learning'. It provides a range of activities that early settings can use to enhance children's physical development for children aged three to five years old.

What are Gross Motor Skills?

For the developing child the ability to move the body and explore the environment influences intellectual, social and emotional development. It leads to knowledge and understanding about the world and how we fit into it. It also helps us to develop and formulate concepts and ideas which later are shown through drawing and writing. We learn to move and move to learn. Gross motor skills involve the large muscles of the body that enable such functions as maintaining balance, walking, climbing, jumping, pushing, pulling and ball skills. They are the building blocks for the development of fine motor skills. Gross motor skills begin to develop right from birth, and keep developing at a rapid pace right up until we are around the ages of 6 and 7. Appropriate play activities are key to providing children with the stimulation to help their motor skills development.

Why do we need to develop these skills for play and learning?

To:

- Be able to move confidently in and around our environment.
- Appreciate the size and shape of our body in order that we can move and interact with the environment.
- Respond to speed, direction and force of movements.
- Control our body movements whilst balancing, running, jumping or throwing.



- Organise and co-ordinate our arms and legs for activities such as riding a bike, or climbing.
- Know where our body is when it is turning, sliding or upside down.
- Support language and perceptual development.
- Enable choice and control within our environment.
- Support co-operative experiences in play – social skills.
- Promote all round development and well being.
- Promote health – muscle development, strength, stamina and endurance.

What is needed for Gross Motor Skills?

- Strength and control of the muscles in the body and limbs.
- The ability to co-ordinate the both sides of the body with one another as well as co-ordinate the top and bottom halves of the body.
- Balance.
- Body, space and directional awareness.
- The ability to react to and time movements.
- Muscle-memory and re-call (to be able to remember the movements our muscles have made and recall them when we need to use the same movements again).
- Motivation and curiosity.



Sequential Development of Gross Motors Skills








All children are different and the development of gross motor skills are influenced by a number of factors e.g. child's sex, opportunities for experience, motivation or interest. Therefore children may differ in the rate at which they acquire and master some skills. The following table provides some milestones for the development of general gross motor skills. If there is any concern regarding a child's development this should be discussed with the parent/carers and relevant professional help sought.



Take it Outside

The outdoors is where children want to be. It is the best place for young children to practice and master emerging physical skills and to experience the pure joy of movement. It's also the place where they're likely to burn the most calories, which is absolutely necessary in the fight against obesity.



| Age | Skill | Age | Skill |
|---|-------|---|-------|
|  <p>12 Months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can pull self to stand and sit down again, whilst holding onto furniture • Can crawl on hands and knees • Able to walk forward and sideways with hand held • May stand or walk alone for a few moments | |  <p>3 Years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks upstairs using alternating feet and can carry a toy at the same time • Can climb nursery apparatus with agility • Can ride a tricycle using pedals and steer around wide corners • Can stand and walk on tiptoes. Can momentarily stand on one (preferred) foot when shown • Can sit with feet crossed at ankles • By 3½ years can jump up with both feet leaving the floor • Can throw a ball overhand and catch a large ball on or between extended arms. Can kick a ball forcibly | |
|  <p>15 Months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May walk alone (feet wide apart) • Able to creep upstairs safely (sometimes gets down backwards) • Kneels unaided | |  <p>4 Years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claps in time to music • Walks or runs alone up and down stairs one foot to a step • Navigates self-locomotion skillfully • Can stand walk and run on tip toes • Can stand on one foot for 3-5 seconds and can hop on preferred foot • Increasing skill in ball games – throw, catch, bounce, kick and use a bat | |
|  <p>18 Months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks well with feet only slightly apart. Starts and stops safely • Can run carefully, but has difficulty negotiating obstacles • Pushes and pulls large toys and boxes around the floor • Enjoys climbing. Can climb into adult chair, turn around and sit • Walk upstairs with hand held | |  <p>5 Years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks easily on a narrow line • Active and skilful in climbing, sliding, swinging, digging, and doing various 'stunts' • Able to skip on alternate feet • Can stand on preferred foot for 8-10 seconds • Can hop for on preferred foot forwards for 2-3 metres • Moves rhythmically to music | |
|  <p>2 Years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can run safely, starting, stopping and avoiding obstacles • Squats with complete steadiness • Can push and pull wheeled toys and can walk backwards pulling handle, but may have difficulty in steering them around obstacles • Increasing understanding of size in relation to size and position of objects in environment • Walks up and down stairs holding onto rail (two feet to a step) • Enjoys playing with balls – can throw small ball over-hand. Walks into large ball trying to kick it • Sits on small tricycle, but cannot use pedals. Propels forward with feet • By 2½ years can jump with two feet together from low step. Can stand on tiptoes if shown | | | |

Fit to Live

Children learn by example so let them see you walk, run, bike, build, dance, climb, or play ball. During reading time, share books about people who lead active lives so that the children become aware of and see other people



(adults and children) being active. Whatever activities are selected to implement with children, the important thing to remember is that they need to have many opportunities for physical activity. Activities should vary widely in terms of the different motor skills involved to perform them. When children learn to enjoy physical activity early, they start to build and maintain habits for physically active lifestyles that last a lifetime.

Try to include physical activities in daily routines. It is important to make sure that during the day, the children have plenty of opportunities for active play.

Observing Children's Gross Motor Skills

When observing children playing it is easy to see that there is a range of competence. There are those who move with competence and confidence, and there are those who can do it but not very well, and their movements appear awkward compared to the other children. They may not persevere with the task and if they do their skills do not appear to improve. They may not appear to enjoy the activity and quickly learn to avoid activities that challenge them.

Here are some aspects to consider when observing children at play:

- How are the children moving? – slow/fast, deliberate, can they sustain the movement? Are the movements fluid and do they have

rhythm? Was the movement appropriate for the action – too hard, too fast? Could they make adjustments when pointed out? Does the child have a sense of where their body is relative to others or equipment they are using?

- Where are the children moving? – do they avoid certain activities such as apparatus? Do they avoid playing near other children? Do they 'move' in the right direction?

Of course, when observing children's gross motor skills bear in mind that their abilities will be relative to the child's age and experience. Remember that one or two things in isolation are not likely to be indicative of a problem. Be sure also to check that there are no underlying issues that may affect function e.g. the need to wear glasses.

Identifying Children with Additional Needs

Observation of children whilst playing and learning is often enough to raise concerns about the quality of their motor skills. However, a more detailed baseline information of the children's abilities and difficulties is often required in order to determine the nature and extent of any problems being experienced. An example of a checklist which can be used in the early years setting is shown on page 8.

Importance of early identification and support for those children whose gross motor skills may be a cause for concern

It is harder to identify motor control difficulties in the early years due to the variations in normal development. This is especially so for children with milder difficulties. Often these children achieve motor milestones within normal limits, and their ability may be seen as reasonably consistent with their peers. Any gap may not be that great, and expectations at this age are not so high. As the child is more likely

What are Gross Motor Skills?

Gross Motor Skills Checklist

| Name: | Setting: | Date: | | |
|---|-----------|----------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Age: | Staff: | | | |
| Abilities | Does well | Sometimes needs help | Always needs help | Comments |
| Can run skillfully around obstacles and corners also whilst pushing/pulling large toys | | | | |
| Can throw a ball overhand and catch a large ball with arms outstretched | | | | |
| Can use a variety of locomotion with body control – jump, roll, run | | | | |
| Can kick a ball forcibly | | | | |
| Can ride a tricycle with skill and make sharp turns easily | | | | |
| Can use a variety of play equipment including slides, swings and climbing frames with agility | | | | |
| Can judge body space in play – fitting into confined spaces/ negotiating holes and boundaries | | | | |
| Can climb nursery apparatus with agility | | | | |
| Can demonstrate the control necessary to hold a shape or fixed position | | | | |
| Can walk along a low beam/obstacle (10cm wide) for a short distance | | | | |
| Can sustain physical play (endurance and stamina) appropriate to age | | | | |
| Can persevere in repeating actions/ attempts when developing a new skill | | | | |
| Can exhibit some appropriate safety measures | | | | |
| Other | | | | |
| ACTION | | | | |

to be male, it is often assumed that any delay in his mastery of motor skills are due to his sex i.e. it is generally accepted that boys develop at a slower rate than girls at this stage. Any delay is commonly responded to as 'well he's a boy, and he'll soon grow out of it'.

Sometimes it is not the movement skill itself but a behavioural issue that draws attention to the child. The child may be finding it difficult to make sense of what is going on around them. Learning and mastering a new skill may be difficult for them and they do not know why. Temper tantrums and acting out may become apparent, or for some children they become passive and withdraw. It is therefore important to look beyond what might first be apparent and the child should be observed across a period of time and over a range of activities. The early years practitioner therefore plays a very important role in the early identification of children with movement difficulties.

Questions to Consider if you are Concerned

- Is the child delayed in all aspects or just in specific areas relating to motor control and co-ordination?
- What pace is the child developing – along normal lines or deviating?
- Are you aware of any specific learning difficulties in the family e.g. other siblings that may have been through your establishment?
- Do you know if the child was late in reaching any of his developmental milestones?
- Is the parent/carer expressing any concerns?

If a concern is highlighted then procedures for onward referral should be initiated (see appendix).

Activity Resources

This resource has been developed to provide a range of activities which promotes various aspects of gross motor skills. Each activity is laid out on an easy to use card and will indicate which elements are being helped. These will be referred to in as 'Body Skills'. They will consider:

- *Balancing* whilst moving around on uneven or unstable surfaces
- *Controlling movements* such as judging how hard or soft to throw a ball or control the body when running, stopping, climbing and balancing
- *Co-ordination* for climbing, crawling and using ride on toys and trikes
- *Muscle/body* strength for pushing, pulling and carrying
- *Body awareness* to go under, through and between obstacles or play equipment
- *Eye hand* or *eye foot* co-ordination for throwing, catching, kicking and hitting a ball
- *Linking actions* for skipping or other continuous movements later such as hopscotch and music and movement.

To be able to know and to feel how the body moves is important for learning. Without 'labeling' experiences it will be hard for the child to attach meaning to what they are doing. Therefore each activity card has a 'language for doing' so that concepts and vocabulary can be used to support language and learning development (links for learning). In this instance only English words are used. Settings are encouraged however, to apply Welsh as appropriate. The card also suggests other areas of learning where the activity can be applied. Each activity also provides a 'what else can we do?' box with some additional suggestions for developing the activity.

Enabling Participation – Differentiating and Adapting Activities

Children need to learn through their own efforts. Once they learn to do this they can interact with their environment with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Children who experience difficulties with gross motor skills may need to be encouraged to take the initiative and responsibility for their own learning and experiences. It may therefore be necessary to provide opportunities to modify the environment in ways that work for them.

Consider whether the child can be enabled to participate if:

- A different movement could be used e.g. walk not run
- The equipment used is different e.g. use balloons instead of balls as they move more slowly and allow time for the child to respond. Use woolly pompom balls so when they are dropped they don't roll away
- The equipment was lower to the ground
- Equipment or play materials were larger, lighter or easier to hold
- The child had extra time to practice/learn the skills needed
- The material was bright with contrasting colours. If sound was added to draw attention e.g. add some rice grains into balloons so that they rattle when patted
- The play material was positioned differently e.g. higher, lower or off to one side
- The child was positioned differently e.g. kneeling instead of standing.

Gross Motor Skills: At the Seaside

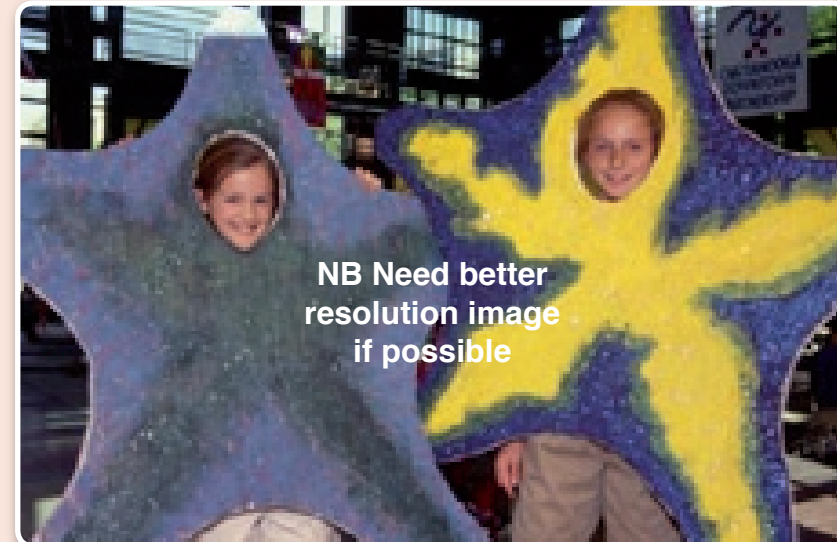
The Activity

Talk to the children about the seaside and what they might find. Make up movements or physical skills around this theme. Link with stories the children may have read.

Star fish – stand with legs and arms out wide; **Shell** – curl up small; **Crab** – move sideways; **Sea horse** – gallop around the space; **Shark** – run; **Whale** – move slowly; **Dolphin** – run and jump

You will need:

- Space



Learning Links

Language for Learning

Shapes – wide, small, tall

Movements – fast, slow, heavy, sideways, gallop, run, jump

Body Skills

Balance, Co-ordination

Body awareness, controlling movement

Linking sequences

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

Creativity

Language Literacy and communication

What Else Can We Do?

- Link other movement rhymes such as 'Row, Row, Row the Boat and Five Little Fishes Swimming on the Shore.'
- Build some 'sand castles' but make them out of big cardboard boxes.
- Play the ice cream cone game – place a tennis ball in the rim of a paper cup. The children have to carry the 'ice cream cone' from one end of the space to the other without dropping it. Add some obstacles to make it harder.
- Place some large cushions on the floor and go for a walk over the 'sand dunes'.

Gross Motor Skills: Bubbles

The Activity

The adults blow bubbles (the children can do them as well). As the bubbles float, the children can either 'pop' them by poking them with their fingers, 'catch them' by clapping the bubbles between their hands or stamp/jump on them when they hit the ground.

You will need:

- Pot of bubbles (commercially available or home made – see recipes)
- Space with a non-slip surface



Learning Links

Language for Learning

Problem solving – 'what happens if?', 'how can you?'

Movements – poke, pop, burst, stamp, clap, high, low

Body Skills

Balance, eye/hand or eye/foot co-ordination

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

Creativity

What Else Can We Do?

- Explore different bubble activities – see recipes.
- Make other bubbles – through water play e.g. soap flakes.
- Jump on some bubble wrap paper to pop the bubbles.
- Invite the children to pretend to be bubbles and float around the space. Twirl gently and float to the ground.
- Play catch games using other things that float e.g. balloons, feathers and leaves.

Gross Motor Skills: Bubbles 2

Bouncy Bouncy Bubbles

A fun solution that you can bounce off your clothes.

What you need:

- 2 pkts unflavoured powdered gelatine
- 1L hot water (just boiled)
- 50 to 70 ml glycerine
- 2 teaspoons of caster sugar
- 50ml washing-up liquid

Dissolve the gelatine in the hot water and then add the washing-up liquid and glycerine.

Note: You will need to reheat this mixture whenever you use it, as it will gel. Two to three minutes in a microwave should do it, but keep an eye on it the first time.

Thick Bubble Solution

A very thick, gooey solution that forms bubbles strong enough to withstand a small puff of air. You can blow bubbles inside of bubbles with this mixture and you don't need a straw. Just make a bubble and blow.

What you need:

- 2.5 to 3 parts water to 1 part washing-up liquid
- Glycerine
- 3 teaspoons of caster sugar

Add ingredients and mix well.

Make a Bubble Wand

- Make huge wands out of wire coat-hangers. Tape ends for safety
- Blow through drinking straws and make lots and lots of little bubbles.
- Raid kitchen drawers - look carefully and there are bound to be a few kitchen implements that have holes in them e.g. pastry cutters, funnels, tea strainers
- Fly swatters with holes

Basic Bubble Solution Bubble

- 20 fl oz water
- 1 fl oz washing-up liquid
- 2 dessertspoons glycerine
- Food colouring (optional, and for outside use only!)

Gross Motor Skills: Bumper Car

The Activity

The children step into a hoop and hold them at waist level. Explain that this is their 'car' and they should not bump anyone else's. Give them word directions e.g. stop and go, stand up and sit down.

Give some particular instructions to match movements e.g. **Motorway** – run, **running out of petrol** – jump, **flat tyre** – stand on one leg, **reverse** – go backwards.

You will need:

- Hoops
- Space



Learning Links

Language for Learning

Movement – in, out, around, up, down, backwards, forwards

Speed – fast, quick, slow, stop, still

Body Skills

Body/spatial awareness

Control of movements

Balance and co-ordination

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

Personal social and well-being

What Else Can We Do?

- Set out cones or obstacles to 'drive the cars' around or travel on different surfaces.
- Play stop-go games with traffic light colours – 'red = stop', 'yellow = walk', 'green = run'.
- Have one child drive his/her 'car' around the space and collect a passenger to join them.
- Roll the 'car wheels' (hoops) along the ground.
- Musical cars – lay out some hoops. To music the children move around the space pretending to drive a car (not using the hoops). When the music stops the children have to find a hoop and sit down.

Gross Motor Skills: Carnival Games

The Activity

Set up a few skill games and have a mini carnival:

Line up some empty drinks bottles and knock over with a ball.

Line up some empty drinks bottles and throw some hoops over the bottles.

Line up some bottles on a bench and throw /kick balls to knock them over.

You will need:

- Empty drinks bottles
- Hoops, soft balls



Learning Links

Language for Learning

Prepositions – in, out, on, over, through, up, down

Movements – push, kick, throw, toss, slide

Force – harder, softer

Body Skills

Balance and movement control

Eye/hand and eye/foot co-ordination

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

Maths

What Else Can We Do?

- Explore what other games might be played e.g. use a fishing net and catch some ducks which are floating in a bowl of water.
- Have an animal parade – pretend to be horses, bears, elephants. March or move to music.
- Have clowns and acrobats parade, jump, skip or gallop.
- Decorate a box (dragon, clown, lion) and invite the children to throw soft balls/bean-bags into the box.
- Tie some hoops with string and hand from a door jamb or similar. Throw some balls/bean-bags through the hoops.

Gross Motor Skills: Football Crazy

The Activity

Set up two markers to act as the goals. Place a ball a little way from the goal. Invite the children to come up and kick the ball into the goal.

Change the game by using different sized balls. You can also play this on a carpeted area, but rather than standing, try high kneeling (kneel up tall). This challenges balance a bit more.

You will need:

- Large balls
- Space



Learning Links

Language for Learning

Movement – run, kick, roll, stand, walk, bounce

Speed – fast, slow, stop, go, still

Directions – forward, back, up, down, in, out, between, near, far

Body Skills

Co-ordination and movement control

Balance

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

Maths

What Else Can We Do?

- Set up 3 or 4 cones or markers. Invite the children to weave the ball around the cones. They can do this in what ever manner they can e.g. using their hands to guide the ball, using their feet or even holding a bat.
- The children each have a ball and roll it along the ground. They have to chase after it and see if they can catch it. Start with bigger sized balls and decrease the size as the children get proficient.
- The children stand with legs astride holding a small ball. See if they can pass the ball under their legs, from front to back/back to front and around their ankles. See if they can then pass the ball around their middles.
- Set up some cones/empty drinks bottles and see if the children can kick the ball and knock the cones over.

Gross Motor Skills: Freddie the Frog

The Activity

Each child has a bean-bag. The box or hoop is placed in the middle of the children who are sat/stood in a circle. Everyone chants:

*Freddie the Frog went to jump on a log
And, SPLASH, he fell into the pond.*

On the word "SPLASH", one child throws the bean-bag into the box. Keep repeating until everyone has a turn. Change the game by increasing the times 'splash' is said and throw bean-bags corresponding to that number.

You will need:

- Box or hoop
- Bean-bags or other soft objects to throw
- Space



Learning Links

Language for Learning

Prepositions – in, out, on, over, beside, next to

Movements – throw, toss, slide, bounce

Force – harder, softer

Body Skills

Balance and movement control

Eye/hand and eye/foot co-ordination

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

Maths

What Else Can We Do?

- Use letter, number or picture cards instead of hoop/box. Change the card on each new game.
- Place some old carpet tiles or make some 'lily pads' out of cardboard (make sure they don't slip on the floor). Have the children walk around whilst chanting the rhyme and on the word 'splash' the children jump onto the 'lily pad'.
- The children crouch down low and 'frog hop' around the space or from hoop to hoop/carpet tile (lily pad).
- Explore other methods of sending a ball or bean-bag.

Gross Motor Skills: Beans

The Activity

Using 'beans' as a theme, the children make the shape or move to match the name of the bean.

Broad Runner – wide shape; **Stick beans** – stand straight with arms in the air; **Beans on toast** – lie on floor; **Jelly beans** – wiggle/ shake arms, legs, head and body; **Chilli beans** – pretend to be cold; **Baked beans** – pretend to be hot; **Runner beans** – run around; **Jumping beans** – jump

See if there are other you can think of.

You will need:

- Space



Learning Links

Language for Learning

Movements – wide, tall, wiggle, shake, jump, lying, stretch, wobble

Body parts

Body Skills

Balance and movement control

Co-ordination, body awareness

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

Creativity

Personal social and well-being

What Else Can We Do?

- Make movement to 'Mr Men' such as:
Mr Funny – walk in a 'silly manner'
Mr Wobble – wobble and shake the body and arms/legs
Mr Go backwards – walk backwards (also try Mr Go Sideways)
Mr Bounce – Jump
- Make movements according to different pasta's e.g. 'spaghetti' – body in a straight line, 'noodles' – twist and turn.
- See if there are other characters from books or from TV programmes/films.

Gross Motor Skills: Outer Space

The Activity

Read stories about outer space. Make movements to match the words:

Space walk – slow like an astronaut; **Alien walk** – funny walk;

Spinning planets – stand and spin; **Meteor** – sit and spin;

Star – star shape; **Planet** – make self into a ball;

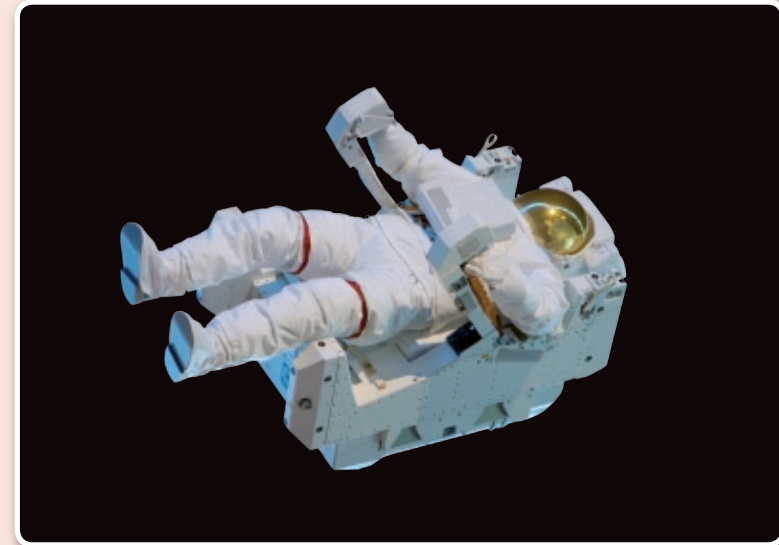
Rocket – run fast; **Orbit** – move around other children;

Black hole – form rings around a centre and rotate (extend into different directions);

Space ball – pretend to be a 'ball' and float around the room then deflate to lie down.

You will need:

- Space



Learning Links

Language for Learning

Movement – stretch, bend, wobble, spin, sit, crouch

Speed – fast, slow, stop, go, still

Directions – forward, back, up, down

Body Skills

Body awareness

Co-ordination and movement control

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

Creativity, language literacy and communication

What Else Can We Do?

- Use other songs and rhymes such as 'Five Little Men in a Flying Saucer' and 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star'.
- Make an outer space obstacle course e.g. use hoops and jump into a crater, use cones and pretend to be planets, move in/out of the cones. Place cushions on the floor and go for a moon walk.
- Throw and catch some balls – pretend to be moons and stars.
- Rockets - the children crouch down low and count '1,2,3' or '5,4,3,2,1' ... 'blast off' and jump up. Try launching a 'flying saucer' and jump off a low surface

Gross Motor Skills: Ribbon Writing

The Activity

Cut long strips of crepe paper and tape several together to make some streamers. You will need two each (one in each hand). Using music with different tempos, invite the children to make patterns and shapes in the air with their streamers.

You will need:

- Crepe paper, music



Learning Links

Language for Learning

The shape, the direction, sensation and link to moods of music

Speed, force

Awareness of space and others

Body Skills

Arm strength

Spatial awareness

Using eyes and hands together

Using and controlling tools and objects

Grips and grasps to hold and do

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

Creativity

What Else Can We Do?

- Incorporate all the different moves to make up letter formation – up, down, diagonal, circle, horizontal, bumps and squiggles, zig-zag.
- Explore what else can be used to make the movements e.g. pom-poms, scarves.
- Explore different music to match the shape e.g. marching music for up/down shapes – make a letter/shape dance.
- Wave some flags and pretend to be in a marching band.
- Make a Maypole to dance around.

Gross Motor Skills: Snow Balls

The Activity

The children scrunch up the paper into balls – 'snow balls'. Have the children line up and throw their snow balls into some hoops. When they have thrown, the children then have to run and collect all the snow balls as quickly as they can before they all 'melt'. Count how many 'snow balls' there are. As well as throwing the 'snow balls' forward, see if they can throw the 'snow ball up in the air'. If they can see if they can catch them.

You will need:

- Space
- Paper
- Hoops



Learning Links

Language for Learning

Movement – throw, toss

Direction – forward, up, down, away, near

Speed – fast, slow

Body Skills

Eye/hand co-ordination

Movement control and strength

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

Creativity

What Else Can We Do?

- Tear up paper into small pieces and put in the centre of a parachute or large blanket. Wave the parachute/blanket up and down and make a snow storm.
- Fill up a pillow case with scrunched-up newspaper. Draw a face on it (snowman). The children take it in turns to roll a large ball at the snowman to knock him over. Alternatively make snowmen skittles out of used drinks bottles.
- Make some footprints and lay them out on the floor. The children have to follow the footprints to find the snowman.
- Dance like snow flakes – twist and turn around the room.

Gross Motor Skills: Spiders Web

The Activity

(Tune: *The Farmer In The Dell*)

Move and imitate actions to the following rhyme:

The spider spins a web (*spin and twirl*)

The spider spins a web (" ")

Round, round, up and down (*crouch low, reach high*)

The spider spins a web (*spin and twirl*)

Additional verses:

She spins it in and out.

She spins it to and fro.

She spins it good and strong.

You will need:

- Space



NB Need better resolution image if possible

Learning Links

Language for Learning

Movement – twist, spin, sit, crouch, stretch

Speed – fast, slow, stop, go, still

Directions – forward, back, up, down

Body Skills

Body awareness

Co-ordination and movement control

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

Creativity

What Else Can We Do?

- Make a balloon spider, add some crepe paper streamers for legs. Pat and catch the spider.
- Make a spiders web. Each child has two lengths of crepe paper streamers. Dance around to music, twirling exploring the space. When the music stops the children make a circle and lay their streamers on the floor in a criss-cross fashion to make a web. The children now cross from one side to the other without stepping on any of the web.
- Make a streamer web and the children have to aim soft balls or bean-bags into the web.
- Explore action rhymes e.g. *Little Miss Muffet* and *Incy Wincy Spider*.

Gross Motor Skills: Teddy Bear Roll

The Activity

The children lie side-by-side on their backs on the blanket. The children sing:

*There were teds in the bed and the little one said roll over, roll over,
So they all rolled over and some fell out ,
But some teds were left and the little one said roll over, roll over,
So they all rolled over and some fell out...*

The children roll over one at a time to the rhyme.

You will need:

- Large blanket
- Space



Learning Links

Language for Learning

Movement – roll, lying, stop, go, still

Directions – forwards, backwards, next to

Numbers

Body Skills

Co-ordination and movement control

Body awareness and linking actions

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

Maths

What Else Can We Do?

- One at a time the children lie on their backs on the blanket and to the tune of 'five fat sausages', the children log roll along the length of the blanket (frying pan) and jump up at the end of the rhyme.
- Make a ramp out of cushions and cover with a blanket and get the children to 'roll down the hill'. Use rhymes like 'Jack and Jill' to sing whilst they are carrying out the actions.
- Lay out a long strip of bubble wrap paper and encourage the children to roll over to make some 'pops'. See what other textures can be used e.g. soft furry fabric.

Gross Motor Skills: Runaway Train

The Activity

Children line up one behind the other. The leader, weaves around the space and all children sing – the 'runaway train went over the hill'. At the end of each verse the child at the back comes to the front and leads the train.

The Runaway train went over the hill and she blew, she blew.

The runaway train went over the hill and she blew, she blew.

The runaway train went over the hill, the last I heard she was blowing still ,and she blew, blew, blue, blew, blew.

Try adding some obstacles and some gradients. Drive the train at different speeds and use different movements.

You will need:

- Space



NB Need better resolution image if possible

Learning Links

Language for Learning

Movement – forwards, walk, run, sway, bend, push, pull

Speed – slow, stop, go, speed up

Direction – forwards, backwards, over, under, through

Body Skills

Co-ordination, balance, body awareness, movement control

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

What Else Can We Do?

- Set out some parallel low balance beams (rails) and walk along the 'railway track'.
- Be a 'goods train'. Load on some soft toys onto a large towel or blanket and pull behind.
- Be a 'shunting engine'. Place some goods in a box or crate and push it around the space.
- Roll some hoops down the track.
- Explore other rhymes and songs.
- Use ribbons on sticks or lengths of crepe paper, one in each hand and make circular movements of the wheels whilst moving about the space.

Gross Motor Skills: Walk the Line

The Activity

Lay out several lengths of rope or washing line along the floor, criss-crossing them over, leading to a treasure at the end. Encourage the children to walk along the rope following its path to reach the 'treasure'. Some children may also be able to walk backwards or sideways.

See if the children can also do 'tricks' along the route e.g. stand on one leg, jump forward, turn around.

You will need:

- Several lengths of skipping rope or washing line
- 'Treasures'



Learning Links

Language for Learning

Direction – forward, backward, sideways, up, down

Movement – balance, stepping

Body Skills

Co-ordination, balance, movement control

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

What Else Can We Do?

- Lay the ropes out in shapes/letters/numbers to walk around and discuss.
- Raise the level of the surface e.g. low balance beam.
- Explore other paths for the children to follow e.g. lay out foot prints for them to step on.
- Lay out different heights for the children to walk on e.g. cushions, low boxes. Include things to step over, through, or under.

Gross Motor Skills: Wiggly Worm

The Activity

Encourage the children to pretend to be worms by lying down on their tummies. They wiggle and squirm and chant this rhyme. Have the children move in different directions

*Wormy wormy ever so squirmy
Wormy wormy slippy and wet
Wormy wormy ever so squirmy
Say hello and home you get*

You will need:

- Carpeted space



Learning Links

Language for Learning

Movement – wriggle, crawl, lying, slide, slither

Speed – slow, stop, go

Direction – forwards, backwards, sideways, zigzag

Body Skills

Co-ordination

Body awareness, movement control and body strength

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

What Else Can We Do?

- Explore what other ways the children can move on the floor e.g. on their backs or rolling over.
- One at a time wrap the children up in a large towel (like a hot dog). Make sure the head is not covered. See if the children can squiggle and squirm out of the blanket..
- Place a large blanket on the floor with the children underneath. See if the children can wiggle and squirm from under the 'earth'.
- Have the children line up on their tummies and see if they can have a wiggle worm race.
- Explore other rhymes such as 'Theres a Worm at the Bottom of the Garden.

Gross Motor Skills: At the Zoo

The Activity

Invite the children to move around like different animals. Use pictures to help the children if needed.

Slithery snakes – *crawl on tummy*

Kangaroo – *jump*

Flamingo – *stand on one leg*

Crocodile – *open/close arms wide for mouth*

Elephant – *heavy, slow walk*

Butterflies – *flap arms and move around the room*

Sea lion – *lie on tummy and push up on arms*

Lion – *crawl on all fours*

See what other animals you can think of

You will need:

- Space

Learning Links

Language for Learning

Movements – slither, jump, balance, slide, flutter, fly

Directions – forward, backwards, around, up, down

Body Skills

Co-ordination

Body awareness

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding



What Else Can We Do?

- Explore animal rhymes and action songs.
- Play feed the elephant – Make an elephant by painting and decorating a box. Invite the children to throw 'peanuts' (bean-bags) into the elephant's mouth.
- Make an obstacle course with a zoo theme.
- Do sea lion tricks – balance a bean-bag on body parts.
- Play penguin knock out – use empty drinks bottles or skittles (penguins) and bowl them over with a ball.
- Play 'monkey balance' – balance along a rope laid out on the ground or a low obstacle to find some 'bananas' at the other end and bring back.

Gross Motor Skills: Movement Rhymes 1

The Activity

Go for a Swim (Tune – *The Mulberry Bush*)

The children jump into the hoop and make swimming movements and chant the following rhyme:

Jumping in the swimming pool, swimming pool, swimming pool,
Jumping in the swimming pool on a lovely sunny day

Now try other actions – 'jump out of the pool', 'splash', 'paddle', use arms to make swimming movements

You will need:

- Hoops
- Space



Learning Links

Language for Learning

Movements – jump, bend, splash, paddle

Speed – fast, slow, quick, stop, start

Prepositions – out, up, down, in

Body Skills

Co-ordination

Body strength

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

What Else Can We Do?

- On a carpeted surface the children lie on their tummies and pretend to swim, by moving their bodies using arms and legs (commando crawl). Also try 'back crawl' by lying on backs and moving using legs to push backwards.
- Pretend to go for a swim around the room using different arm movements e.g. windmill motion for 'front crawl'. Windmill both arms together for the butterfly stroke. Reverse for back stroke. Try breast stroke movements or 'doggy paddle'
- Have a 'swimming gala' – 'races' using some of the above movements.

Gross Motor Skills: Movement Rhymes 2

Jump Song

What you need:

- Space

What you do:

Sing or say to individual children to carry out the rhyme:

(child's name), (child's name),
 Jump up and down, Jump up and down, Jump up and down,
 (child's name), (child's name),
 Jump up and down, now sit back down

Variations: replace with 'act like a clown' or 'spin all around' for 'jump up and down', replace 'child's name' with 'everybody'.

Jelly on a Plate

What you need:

- Hoops, space

What you do:

Tune: 'Farmers in the Den'

Place a hoop on the floor and encourage the children to stand in the hoop and sing:

Jelly on the plate
 Jelly on the plate
 Wibble, wobble, wibble, wooble,
 Jelly on the plate

See what other foods the children can think of e.g. sausages, ice cream

Tall as a Tree

What you need:

- Space

What you do:

Children make movements to the words in the rhyme.

Tall as a tree (*stretch up tall*)
 Wide as a house (*stretch out arms and legs wide*)
 Thin as a pin, (*stand still with arms down by sides*)
 Small as a mouse (*curl up into a ball on the floor*)

Jack be Nimble

What you need:

- Skipping rope, space

What you do:

Lay out a skipping rope on the ground and chant:

Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack jump over the candlestick

Invite the children to jump over the 'candlestick' (rope).

Now try holding the rope up and invite the children to go 'under' the rope whilst singing Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack go under the candlestick.

See what other movements there are but you may need to change the obstacle.

Gross Motor Skills: Movement Rhymes 3

I Can Go...

What you need:

- Space

What you do:

I can go on tippy-toe, (*go on tip toes*)

Like a fairy I can go.

I can stamp so that you'd say (*stamp feet*)

"An elephant's at school today."

I can run, I can hop (*run and hop*)

I can spin 'round like a top (*twirl round and round*)

I can stretch my arms out wide (*stretch arms out to the side*)

I can swing from side to side. (*sway to and fro with arms out*)

I can stand up straight and tall, (*stand tall and still*)

I can make myself so small (*crouch into a ball*)

I can kneel without a sound (*kneel*)

And sit cross-legged on the ground (*sit cross-legged*)

Crazy Crabs

What you need:

- Space

What you do:

Crazy crabs walk sideways, what a silly way to go (*on all fours move sideways*)

Snails slip slide forward and that is very slow (*on tummies to crawl*)

Duck waddle, waddle and that is funny too (*high kneeling, flapping bent arms*)

But what about the hopping of the big red kangaroo (*jump about*)

Marching in Our Wellies

What you need:

- Space, hoops – scatter about space

What you do:

Marching in our Wellingtons (*walk around the hoops with big steps*)

Step, step, step

Marching in our Wellingtons

We won't get wet

Splashing through the puddles (*jump in the hoops*)

In the rain, rain, rain

Splashing through the puddles (*jump out of the hoops*)

Then run home again (*run around the hoops*)

Once I Saw A Little Bird

What you need:

- Space

What you do:

Once I saw a little bird come hop, hop, hop; (*hop on the spot*)

So I cried, "Little Bird, will you stop, stop, stop?" (*keep hopping until the last 'stop'*)

I was going to the window to say, "How do you do?" (*wave to others*)

But he shook his little tail (*wiggle bottoms*), and far away he flew. (*fly away*)

Gross Motor Skills: Movement Rhymes 4

I would Like To Be...

What you need:

- Space

What you do:

I like to be a jumping jack
And jump out from a box. (*crouch and jump up – repeat*)
I like to be a rocking horse
and rock and rock and rock. (*sway side to side*)

I like to be a spinning top (*twirl around*)
And spin around and round.
I like to be a rubber ball (*jump up and down*)
and bounce way up and down.

I like to be a big, fast train (*run with arms imitating wheels of train*)
Whose wheels fly round and round.
I like to be a pony small (*gallop*)
And trot along the ground.

I like to be so many things –
A growly, scowly bear (*hands up like 'paws'*)
But really I'm a little child
who sits upon a chair. (*sit down*)

The Spinning Top

What you need:

- Space, hoops – scatter about space

What you do:

I am a spinning top (*twirl around*)
Round and round I go.
Sometimes I go faster, faster, faster! (*speed up*)
Sometimes I go slow. (*turn slowly*)
But, when I'm not spinning round at all..
Then down I fall.

Some children may opt out of this game as it makes them a bit giddy.
Let them sit still for a moment before playing again.

Twist Here and There

What you need:

- Space

Twist here, twist there, (*twist body*)
Kick your leg in the air (*lift up leg*)
Bend over, touch the ground,
Make yourself go round and round (*twirl*)

Stretch your body, reach up high (*reach up tall*)
Till you nearly touch the sky.
Slowly flop down to the floor,
Lie very still... ..jump up once more!

Gross Motor Skills: Parachute Games 1

The Activity

(Tune: *If You're Happy and You Know it*)

When the parachute goes up stomp your feet
 When the parachute goes up stomp your feet
 When the parachute is high, it floats up in the sky
 When the parachute goes up stomp your feet.

Encourage children to think of other movements.
 (bend your knees, nod your head, shout hooray)

You will need:

- Parachute



Learning Links

Language for Learning

Speed and directions – up, down, fast, slow, on, off, high, low

Weight – heavy, light

Body parts

Body Skills

Co-ordination, muscle/body strength, body awareness

Links for Learning

Knowledge and understanding

What Else Can We Do?

- Hold the parachute with two hands then one hand then the other. Try not only facing front but also with backs to the parachute.
- Move around in a circle whilst singing – change directions.
- Vary the height – encouraging the children to reach up high and down low.
- Play some music and lift the parachute up and down in time to the tune.

Gross Motor Skills: Parachute Games 2

Name Game

What you need:

- Parachute

What you do:

Tune: *Row Row Row Your Boat*)

Up, up, up it goes

Down, down, down it comes

If your name is ----- (*put in a child's name*)

Now's your turn to run

As you sing the song have the children raise the parachute above their heads. When a child is named have him/her run under the parachute. Then slowly lower the parachute to try and trap the child. Continue until all children have had a turn.

Popcorn

What you need:

- Parachute

What you do:

All the adults and children hold around the edge of the parachute. In the middle place small soft items such as rolled up socks or small soft toys. These will be the 'popcorn'. The children use their arms to 'jiggle' the parachute to make the popcorn jump in the 'pan'. To add variety, on the word 'go' or count from one to three, the children lift the parachute up quickly into the air to make the 'popcorn' pop out of the pan. For an extension to this game tear up small pieces of paper to make 'snow' and see if the children can make a 'blizzard'.

Round and Round

What you need:

- Parachute

What you do:

The children all hold the parachute around the edge and sing rhymes such as 'here we go round the mulberry bush' or 'round and round the garden' whilst they walk around in a circle. Try adding different movements as the children go around in the circle, such as jump or skip.

There was a Man

What you need:

- Parachute

What you do:

Children walk around in a circle holding onto the parachute and sing:

There was a man in our town
Who went for a WALK one day
But the wind blew so hard
He turned around
And WALKED the other way

Use different actions, such as run, hop, skip, etc. to replace walk.

Gross Motor Skills: Parachute Games 3

Grand Old Duke of York

What you need:

- Parachute

What you do:

Tune: *Grand Old Duke of York*

The Grand Old Duke of York, he had ten thousand men,
He marched them up to the top of the hill (*parachute up*)
And he marched them down again (*parachute down*)
And he marched them to the left (*walk to the left*)
And he marched them to the right (*walk to the right*)
And he marched them up (*parachute up*)
And he marched them down (*parachute down*)
Oh what a silly sight (*shake the parachute really fast*)

Washing Machine

What you need:

- Parachute

What you do:

Divide the children into 2 groups. Half sit under the parachute (*washing*). The others hold the parachute (*the washing machine*).

Put in the powder – shake the parachute

Wash – children walk/run around holding parachute

Rinse – shake parachute then children walk the other way

Dry – lift parachute up and down

Reverse roles

See Saw

What you need:

- Parachute

What you do:

The children all hold the parachute around the edge and sing 'see saw magery daw or 'row, row, row the boat', pulling the parachute to and fro.

Flying Saucer

What you need:

- Parachute

What you do:

The children hold the parachute around the edge and lift up and down. On the command '*let go*', release the parachute and watch as it slowly floats away. You might try this with other fabrics to see what happens. Also play outside... but not on a windy day!!!

Gross Motor Skills: Parachute Games 4

Parachute Breeze

What you need:

- Parachute

What you do:

This is a nice activity for transition. All the children (if they can fit) lie on their back in a space which will be under the parachute. The adults (if there is enough) hold the parachute and gently over the children and 'waft' the parachute up and down. The temptation is for the children to lift arms and legs to touch the parachute as it descends. Try to encourage them to lie still. When they are as calm (as can be expected) gently let the parachute drop to cover the children. Instruct them that when an adult counts to three, the children must see if they can get out as fast as they can (without hurting other children !)

Go for a Swim

What you need:

- Parachute

What you do:

Lay the parachute out on the floor with the adults all around on their knees. The children sit or lie in the middle of the parachute. The adults/and or other children make waves with the parachute.

Swing Me Over

What you need:

- Parachute

What you do:

This is a nice activity for young children. The adults roll up the parachute around the edge (to make a smaller parachute) and lay it on the floor. The adults kneel around the edge of the parachute. A child sits in the middle. The adults roll the parachute in so that the child is well cradled. On the command the adults lift the parachute and with a swinging action (backward/forward) say the following rhyme...

*Swing me over the water, Swing me over the sea
Swing me over the garden wall and swing me home for tea*

*Swing me over the tree tops, swing me over the zoo
Swing me over the garden wall and swing me back to you*

Also try:

Swing So Gently

Swing, swing, swinging so gently.

Swing, swing, swing to and fro.

Swing, swing, swinging so gently.

Swing, swing, swing high and low

Take care to mind your backs.