

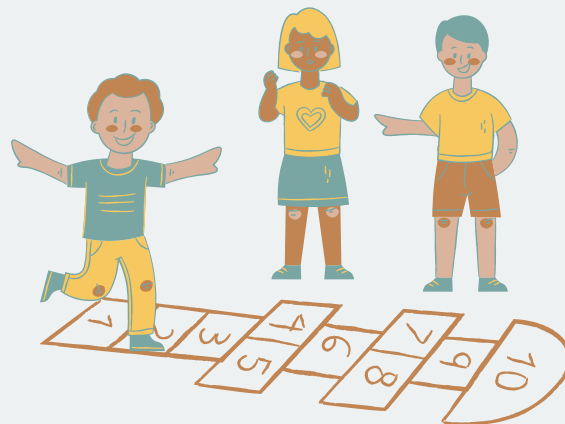
# Gross Motor Development

## What are gross motor skills?

- The physical skills that include the **large muscles** in our arms and legs and the stabilizing muscles of our core that help us **move around and participate in the world around us**.
- These skills are needed for whole-body movements such as:
  - Learning to support oneself for crawling
  - Climbing on the monkey bars at a playground
  - Walking in between school classes
  - Kicking a ball at a soccer game
- Gross motor skills also serve the essential foundation needed to build upon for smaller, more precise movements of everyday life. A few examples are listed below:
  - A strong core helps us sit at the table to eat dinner or complete a handwriting task.
  - Good balance helps us grab hard to reach objects
  - Strong muscles and range of motion helps us put on a jacket and button our pants

## Why are gross motor skills important?

- Difficulty or delays in gross motor skills can inhibit the ability to participate in all the activities that give meaning.
- Without early movement, children are at risk for low self esteem and the avoidance of physical activity.
- Strong gross motor muscles lead to increased mobility of smaller muscles and the ability to perform more precise tasks.
- Gross motor skills equip children with the strength, endurance, coordination, and mobility to tackle daily demands



# Gross Motor Developmental Milestones

It is so important to note that every child and their development is **unique!** It is unlikely that your child will reach these milestones at the exact time as another child. Milestones should be used as a *guide* and not a *strict timeline*.

Below is a list of gross motor developmental milestones:

<b>1-2 years</b>	<b>2-3 years</b>	<b>3-4 years</b>	<b>4-5 years</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gets into a sitting position without assistance</li><li>• Pulls self up to stand</li><li>• Stands well</li><li>• Begins to walk independently</li><li>• Walk up stairs with 2 feet on each step</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Walks up and down stairs holding on to support</li><li>• Pushes, pulls, carries toys when walking</li><li>• Kicks and throws ball</li><li>• Climbs on and off furniture</li><li>• Begins to run with infrequent falls</li><li>• Stands on tiptoes</li><li>• Catches large ball thrown gently</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Throws balls 5-7 feet</li><li>• Independent in walking and climbing steps without support</li><li>• Begins to be able to balance on one foot</li><li>• Able to run and stop without falling</li><li>• Begins to walk down steps independently with one foot per step</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hops and stands on one foot</li><li>• Kicks ball forward</li><li>• Catches bounced ball most of the time</li><li>• Moves forwards and backwards with agility</li><li>• Balance on one foot continues to improve</li></ul>

## How can we help improve these skills?

According to research, there is strong evidence that play and occupation-based intervention that takes place within a child's home and school environment supports development. Below are a few ideas of how to facilitate the improvement of these skills at home:

- A time set aside each day for movement
- Climbing on a play ground
- Simon says
- Jump rope
- Video games like wii sports
- Setting up an obstacle course
- Yoga
- Extracurricular activities (sports, gymnastics, dance, etc.)
- Movement videos (For example, GoNoodle or Youtube videos)



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