



# Occupational Therapy Connection

## Monthly Newsletter

### Gross Motor Skills

Gross motor coordination is the movement and coordination of the large muscles of the body, including the legs, trunk, whole arms and feet that enable: walking, jumping, kicking, climbing, running, balancing, etc.

#### **If your child's gross motor skills are poor, it can affect their work in the classroom!**

Here are some of the ways that your child uses gross motor skills in the classroom:

- Strong, stable muscles in the shoulders and core (trunk) help your child to sit upright and not slouch while sitting at a desk. This also helps with concentration, as he/she won't have to wiggle around as much to keep upright.
- Strong, stable muscles at the shoulder can help your child to develop good fine motor skills, which are needed for scissor cutting and a good pencil grip, as well as for good pencil control.
- Hand-eye coordination can help with handwriting skills.
- Good bilateral coordination means your child can use both hands together well and will enable your child to cut with scissors, use a ruler properly, tie shoelaces and use a knife and fork together properly.
- Taking part in gross motor games can help your child to learn to follow instructions and to be good at planning, both of which are essential in the classroom.
- Midline crossing, spatial perception and directionality skills also develop through gross motor games. These skills help your child to space written work well on the page, and aid in overcoming letter reversals.

#### **Tips and tricks to promote general Gross motor skills**

- Picking up objects/toys from the floor
- Climbing up a slide, climbing a tree, or climbing up stairs on all fours.
- Roll down a hill or across the floor
- Lift something heavy - have them take out the garbage, carry bags
- Push and pull items
- Work or play on all fours
- Somersaults
- Sweep floor, rake leaves, shovel snow
- Play tug of war or hula hoop
- Animal walks

#### **Tips and tricks to promote bilateral integration**

(The ability to use two sides of the body, at the same time, in a coordinated way)

- Clapping games
- Copy gross motor movements
- Stringing beads and lacing
- Card games
- Tearing paper
- Opening containers, glue sticks, markers, zip lock baggies
- Scooping and pouring
- Yoga
- Using a rolling pin
- Throwing and catching
- Sweeping or raking

# Gross Motor Letter Fun!

Spell out your first name, last name, favorite character or even sight words.  
Pick letters out of a container, roll a letter die, or pick a color.

- A** – jump up and down 10 times
- B** – hop on right foot 5 times
- C** – walk like a bear for 10 seconds
- D** – hop on left foot 5 times
- E** – hop like a frog 8 times
- F** – hop on left foot 5 times
- G** – balance on left foot for 10 seconds
- H** – balance on right foot for 10 seconds
- I** – march for 12 steps
- J** – walk backwards for 12 steps
- K** – walk sideways for 12 steps
- L** – gallop around the room for 10 seconds
- M** – do 10 sit ups
- N** – crab crawl for 10 seconds
- O** – pretend to pedal a bike with your hands for 10 seconds
- P** – hold a plank for 15 seconds
- Q** – do 10 wall push ups
- R** – fly around the room like a bird for 12 seconds
- S** – bend down and touch your toes 10 times
- T** – reach up and touch the clouds for 15 seconds
- U** – crawl like a soldier for 15 seconds
- V** – walk around the room on high knees for 10 seconds
- W** – march like a toy soldier for 15 seconds
- X** – do 5 push ups
- Y** – do 10 jumping jacks
- Z** – crawl on hands and knees 12 seconds