

SEND Bulletin NO. 11

Gross/Fine Motor Skills

Gross motor skills

Gross motor skills are the movements of the large muscles of the body. These skills involve the coordinated effort of the large muscle groups. Pupils with some medical conditions have poor or delayed gross motor skills, which affects balance and motor planning. The activities suggested are general ones that can be used to develop gross motor coordination for most pupils in the class. However, some pupils may need a much more specific programme of activities. Occupational therapists and physiotherapists will need to assess individual needs in some cases and advise on particular gross motor activities to address their specific difficulties.

Children with difficulties in this area may have:

- difficulty throwing and catching a ball
- balance problems when hopping and jumping
- balance problems when using apparatus in gymnastics
- low muscle tone
- balance problems when riding a bike
- confidence as speakers and listeners
- good verbal comprehension skills.

Activities to develop gross motor skills

Dodgems Run around in different directions, dodging out of the way of one another. When the word 'change' is called out, change direction.

Stone cold Run around in different directions. Each pupil has a number (1 to 6); when their number is called out the pupil must stand still until the next number is called out.

Stepping stones Use small hoops as stepping stones; pupils 'cross the water' by jumping from one to the other without falling in.

Hopscotch Pupils can jump to begin with until they are confident with hopping.

Parachute games Choose those games that use the large muscle movements; specific individual targets can be incorporated into the activity.

Climbing activities Use a range of large apparatus; specific individual targets can be incorporated into the activity.

Balancing activities Use a range of both small and large apparatus; specific individual targets can be incorporated into the activity.

Bean bag activities Paired and team games involving throwing (e.g. to each other, or into a hoop) and balancing; specific individual targets can be incorporated into the activity.

Ball games A variety of paired or team games involving rolling, throwing, catching kicking, dribbling.

Batting games A variety of games involving the use of bats, sticks or racquets (rounders, tennis, cricket, football, hockey, etc.).

Skipping activities Individual, paired and group games (e.g. salt, mustard, vinegar, pepper).

Fine motor skills

This is the ability to use the smaller muscles in the body for precise tasks, such as writing, drawing, sewing, using scissors, tying shoelaces, etc. Many school activities involve developing fine motor skills.

The activities suggested are general ones that can be used to develop fine motor skills for most pupils in a class. However, some pupils may need a much more specific programme of activities. Occupational therapists and physiotherapists will need to assess individual needs in some cases and advise on particular fine motor activities to address their specific difficulties.

Children with difficulties in this area may have:

- poor eye-hand coordination
- poor manipulative skills
- immature drawing skills
- poor handwriting and presentation skills
- some perceptual difficulties
- good auditory memory skills
- confidence as speakers and listeners
- good verbal comprehension skills
- some strengths in verbal and non-verbal reasoning
- enjoyment in using multi-sensory strategies when learning.

Activities to develop fine motor skills

Pencil and paper - a) create shapes and patterns using free pencil movements; b) maze and tracking activities; c) tracing; d) line links (e.g. mouse to cheese); e) dot to dot.

Sorting Sort small objects (e.g. paper clips, buttons) to encourage precise finger movements.

Role play a) dressing up (involves use of clothing fasteners like zips, buttons etc.); b) finger puppets and string puppets.

Patterns Copy patterns using beads, peg boards and shapes; investigate tessellating shapes.

Puzzles Complete puzzles of varying degrees of difficulty.

Writing patterns Copy writing patterns using coloured sand, chalk and other media; trace or copy patterns for display.

Jacks or marbles Play games that can help with fine movement control.

Art and design a) colour in using different media; b) paint and print using different size brushes and different types of materials; c) model with clay.

Scissor control a) cut and paste for patterns, pictures, project scrapbooks, classification activities; b) sewing activities.

Design and technology a) open-ended activities using a range of tools and media; b) open-ended activities using given construction apparatus.

Computer-aided picture and design activities Use graphics programs and encourage use of different features.

Musical instruments Use precise finger movement to play an instrument (e.g. a recorder).

Next time: ME (myalgic encephalomyelitis or encephalopathy)

If you have any interesting information or resources which you would like to share with your colleagues via this fortnightly bulletin, please e-mail them to me:

ari@st-peters.bournemouth.sch.uk

Many thanks

Anne