

Visual Perception/hand-eye coordination

- play matching games e.g. dominoes, snap, pairs;
- jigsaws at right level and with adult help and encourage;
- dot to dot books;
- word searches; mazes;
- 'Where's Wally?' books;
- Remote control cars;
- Throwing and catching a small ball or toy in the air or to a friend;
- Pelmanism.



Gross Motor Skills

- Visit play areas with climbing equipment, tunnels etc;
- Walk as often as possible;
- Make obstacle courses through furniture/in the garden for child to crawl through;
- Play balloon/ball games;
- Play 'wheelbarrow' games; push-ups; wall push-ups;
- Play swingball;
- Skittle games;
- Targets e.g. throwing a beanbag into waste bin – if successful increase the distance etc;



Developing Motor Skills



Swimming – be very aware though that if your child is struggling to learn to swim that it might be because of their motor skill immaturity. Please do not put undue pressure on them. Splashing around and having fun is the important bit!



Also Liaise with school and practice the skills that will be needed in PE e.g. throwing/catching a ball.

Cognition and Learning Team

Motor Skill Immaturity

Over recent decades life style changes have had a huge impact on children's development. They are less likely to play out than we were as children because of safety concerns and there have been huge changes too inside the home. All of these have led to an immaturity in motor skill development that is affecting progress in schools.

Children are less likely to crawl as most babies are now placed on their backs to sleep. They are then less likely to develop strong enough shoulder muscles to take their body weight. Laminate flooring also makes crawling very difficult. Babies are therefore more likely to become bottom shufflers and to walk early. Crawling however is a very important stage in development which helps to integrate pathways in a child's brain which in turn develops their ability to learn.



Balance and coordination is achieved through trial and error but many of our children have not had this opportunity. As soon as they are born children begin to interact with their environment. They explore with their limbs and senses and are naturally inquisitive. This is how children begin to learn. They integrate information from all of their senses and through play children practise and perfect movements. Through this they develop purposeful connections in their brain which underpin all learning. Without this children will find it harder to process information and to access the learning on offer in the classroom.



Many children are now starting school with immaturity in their motor development. They are not ready for the increasingly formal learning they are being asked to do in school. Unless we deal with this the children will not be able to reach their potential. Through the frustrations they will feel in school many of these children will not be able to cope and for some their behaviour will become a major issue leading to exclusion from school.

Social and emotional damage can also be done. Children can be embarrassed by their poor physical skills.

We want to stress that this is not a physical difficulty and can be rectified by giving your child the opportunity to practice their skills.

School too will be working on this with you. Unfortunately it may take several weeks before you can see the benefits. These are a few suggestions to get you started. Please make the activities fun and do not add any pressure on yourself or your child. Change and adapt the activities as your confidence grows.

Fine Motor Skills



- Rolling pastry/chappattis;
- Playing with playdough/plasticine;
- Popping bubblewrap;
- Finger puppets;
- Pick a stick games;
- Place a small ball/rolled sock in the palm of hand and tap it one finger at a time, increasing speed as appropriate;
- Play with toys such as 'Etch a Sketch'.
- Sit at a table. Move fingers as if playing fast piano music.
- Place a soft ball in palm of hand. Tap it with one finger at a time.
- Turn cube or any small object in fingers.
- Threading beads – one hand holds string while other hand threads beads.



- Use tweezers to pick up and place a number of small objects into a container.

