



3–5 Years

Physical/Health: Motor Development

WHEN INTRODUCED AND EMPHASIZED: Weeks 4–10, 12, 14–18, 21–23, 25, 28–32

BEHAVIORS TO OBSERVE

- Gross Motor
- Fine Motor

OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Gross Motor

In what ways does the child demonstrate his/her gross motor skills as he/she:

- gallops to and from the table to get a toy (Week 6, Day 5 group activity)? Examples: starts the next gallop with the same foot and leg; brings the other foot and leg forward after taking one large step forward with the lead leg
- moves from area to area (any free play period after Week 4, Day 4)? Examples: runs or gallops outside; walks around obstacles inside
- jumps over objects (Week 21, Day 5 center activity)? Example: bends knees, swings arms, pushes off the ground with both feet, and lands on both feet with feet slightly apart
- balances using the body parts shown on cubes in a staff-facilitated activity (Week 8, Day 5)?
- demonstrates balance and coordination of body during a transition (any transition after Week 8, Day 4)? Examples: balances on one foot while waiting turn to brush teeth; balances on one knee and one elbow while waiting to go inside
- freezes in the position that he/she was in when the music stopped in a staff-initiated activity (Week 10, Day 5 group activity)?
- throws a ball up into the air; catches a ball; throws a ball forward; kicks a ball; (any free play period after Week 18, Day 4)?
- throws a ball underhand toward a target (Week 18, Day 5)?

Fine Motor

In what ways does the child demonstrate his/her fine motor skills as he/she:

- participates in finger plays or songs with actions? Example: lifts one finger at a time while singing “Five Finger Song” (Math Week 6, Day 1 group activity)
- uses tools to manipulate materials? Examples: scoops ice with spoons (Science Week 3, Day 1 center activity); uses tongs or tweezers to explore shredded paper (Science Week 9, Day 3 center activity);



opens and closes a clothespin to place pretend pizza toppings on a pretend pizza (Week 25, Day 4 group activity)

- uses tools to create art (any free play period after Creative Expression Week 6, Day 1)?
- manipulates small items? Examples: makes shapes using yarn (Math Week 9, Day 1 group activity); connects Unifix® cubes to create a pattern; places beads on a pipe cleaner to make a pattern (Math Week 15, Day 2 group activity); connects manipulatives (any free play period)

FOLLOW-UP LEARNING SUPPORTS

Reinforce

The following activities are designed to support the ongoing development of emerging motor development.

Gross Motor

- Set up cones outside for children to practice body movements by moving in a zig-zag, or other pattern, between the cones.
- Use footprint templates from Week 7, Day 4 for children to design and use configurations for moving their bodies. In the Week 7, Day 4 center activity, two footprints denote hopping, three denote marching, and four denote walking. What other ways would children like to move?
- Support children in leading a game of *Follow the Leader*. Encourage children to try as many different safe ways to move as they can.
- Teach the nursery rhyme "Jack Be Nimble," and encourage children to jump over a small block to represent a candlestick. Remind children that they would never really want to jump over a real candlestick. This is a pretend game.
- Provide a mat during free play or outside time. Place the balance line drawings (six pictures) from Week 8, Day 5 on the mat. Encourage children to see how long they can balance in the poses. Invite children to think of new safe poses.
- Read *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle. Encourage children to balance in positions shown in the book. For example, the child pictured on the title page is balancing on one foot and lifting the other foot in the air. He is touching his head and reaching to touch his toes.
- Draw a target on an outdoor wall or on the ground for children to try to hit when throwing a ball. Draw lines at different distances from the target to provide appropriate levels of challenge. Children can try to throw the ball in the air to land on a target on the ground. Provide containers for a more challenging target.
- Provide a bucket of water on a warm day. Dip a ball into the water and throw it at a wall. Invite children to dip balls into water and then throw the ball, trying to hit the wet spot on the wall.



- Encourage children to use an underhand throw to toss a soft ball to another child to catch. Small groupings of children (two or more) can take turns tossing and catching a soft ball.
- Invite children to kick a soft ball into a goal you establish, such as a rectangle drawn or affixed to a wall or, for greater challenge, a cardboard box with its flaps taped inside.

Fine Motor

- Provide varying sizes of materials in the sensory table for children to pick up with clothespins or child-safe tweezers.
- Sing songs with finger motions or lead children in finger plays. Examples of songs with finger motions: "The Itsy Bitsy Spider," "Open, Shut Them," and "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."
- Invite children to use chopsticks at a mealtime instead of a fork and spoon.
- Provide various tools for writing and creating art.
- Provide opportunities to practice fine motor skills outdoors. Examples: Bring markers and paper outside. Tie ribbon to a fence and invite children to weave the ribbon in and out of the fence. Fill a water table with water, provide plastic fish and nets. Encourage children to catch fish.

Reintroduce

The following activities are designed to support the development of motor development that may be challenging for some children. These activities are also appropriate for all children.

Gross Motor

- Repeat the Week 6, Day 4 group activity to reintroduce and practice galloping. Note the scaffolding tip regarding a ribbon on a child's shoe.
- Offer to hold the hands of individual children as they practice hopping. Remind children if a staff member is not available, they can place a hand on a wall to be more stable.
- Incorporate different ways to move in familiar games. Examples: Encourage children to gallop while playing *Sleeping, Sleeping, All the Children are Sleeping*. Encourage children to march in place when an orange circle is displayed in Orange Circle, Purple Circle.
- Play *Follow the Leader* with movements for which children need additional support. Demonstrate and describe the movement before engaging children in the actions.
- Use Week 21, Day 4 to review how to jump. Remind children that jumping is different from hopping. Jumping uses both feet to push off the ground.
- Use balance line drawings (six pictures) from Week 8, Day 5 to practice balance skills during a transition.
- Repeat the Week 9, Day 5 group activity focused on keeping one's balance while turning. Play faster and slower music to provide practice in maintaining balance while moving at different speeds.



- Repeat the Week 10, Day 5 group activity. Offer specific ways to balance when the music stops. Example: Encourage children to crawl and then balance on one knee and two elbows when the music stops.
- Review the Week 16, Day 4 group activity to remind children of steps in throwing a ball up in the air.
- Use the Week 17, Day 4 group activity to review how to catch a ball.
- The Week 18, Day 4 group activity may be repeated to provide practice in throwing a ball underhand.
- Repeat the Week 31, Day 4 group activity as a reminder of steps in kicking a ball. Offer to hold a child's hand to provide stability when the child kicks the ball.

Fine Motor

- Provide support to children as they use their fine motor skills. Examples: Offer to hold one interlocking manipulative while the child pushes another manipulative into the manipulative you are holding. Describe how you are holding your fork and spoon at mealtimes. Describe how you use your fork or spoon to move food from your plate to your mouth.
- Encourage children who frequently choose large-motor areas of the classroom to choose an area where fine motor skills can be practiced. Examples: Invite a child who usually chooses the block area to build with smaller manipulatives. Invite a child who usually chooses the dramatic play area to draw a picture of something he/she would like to pretend, or place smaller items in dramatic play, such as doctor's kits or dollhouses with furniture and miniature people. Encourage children to use fine-motor skills when getting dressed (e.g., zip up their jackets), providing help as needed.
- Repeat the Week 25, Day 4 group activity to offer practice in opening and closing a clothespin, and using a clothespin to move pretend pizza toppings from a bowl to a pretend pizza.

EXAMPLES OF PORTFOLIO ENTRIES

Children in our room are working to strengthen their motor skills. Recently I observed Isabella's motor skills in a variety of settings on different days. Isabella used all of the appropriate steps for moving from one location to another, and for catching, throwing, and kicking an object. She moved fluidly and balanced her body in positions or poses that required part of her body to be off the ground. She also used smooth, coordinated movements with fine motor skills. She used hand movements in songs and fine motor skills to carry out several tasks. We will continue to provide experiences aimed at supporting Isabella's motor development.

Children in our room are working to strengthen their motor skills. Recently I observed Kavon's motor skills in a variety of settings on different days. Kavon demonstrated skill in running, walking, and marching. He kept his lead foot forward when galloping. He hopped two times before losing his balance. Kavon used appropriate steps to throw different objects into the air and to kick a ball from a stationary position. He also used fine motor skills appropriately for hand motions in songs and other fine motor tasks. On several occasions he benefited from a demonstration or description of a task before doing the task himself. We will continue to provide learning experiences aimed at supporting Kavon's motor development.

Guide for Observing and Individualizing



Children in our room are working to strengthen their motor skills. Recently I observed James's motor skills in a variety of settings on different days. James jumped and stood on one foot to get ready to hop. He knows the steps for galloping but at this point finds it challenging to put the steps into a fluid movement. James put his body in suggested balancing positions but found it difficult to maintain his balance in the positions. He demonstrates interest in activities that involve balls and readily kicked a ball from a stationary position. In several activities involving fine motor skills, James used his whole hand (versus fingers) but he used a pincer grasp to hold a bead and to pick up pretend pizza toppings to place on a pretend pizza. We will continue to provide learning opportunities to help James continue development of his motor skills.