



Gross Motor Development Through Childhood: A Parent's Guide



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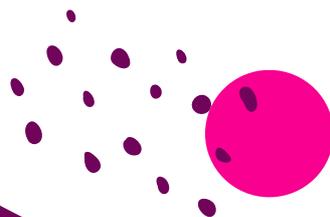
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What Are Gross Motor Skills?

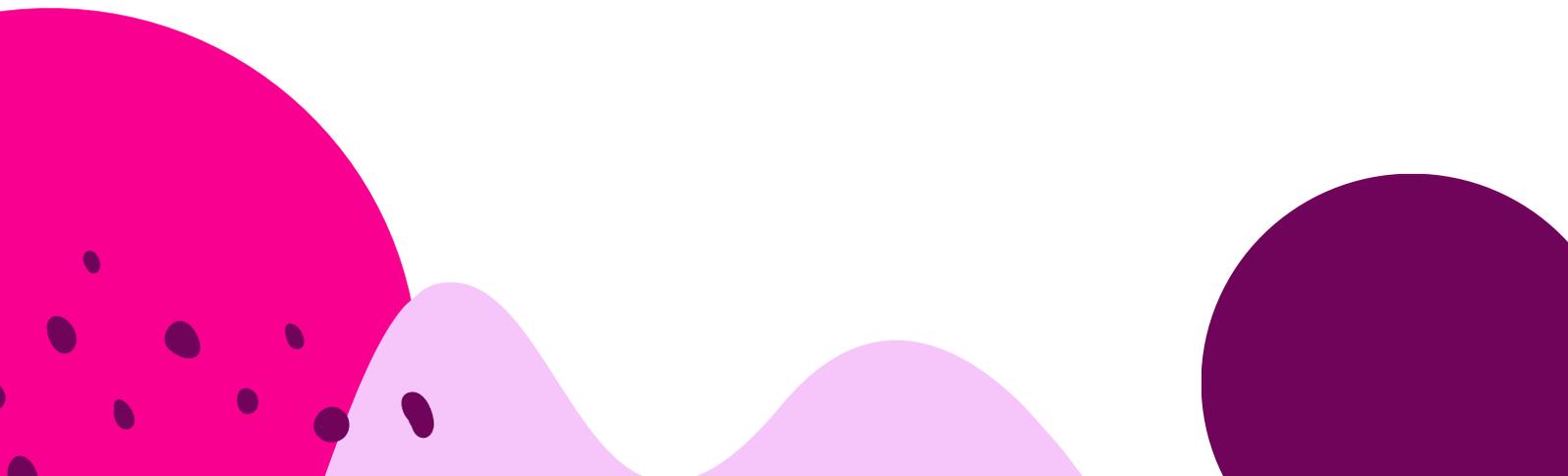
Gross motor skills are the fundamental abilities that involve large muscle groups and enable us to perform essential physical activities such as crawling, walking, running, hopping, jumping, and climbing. These skills are the moves that help children explore, have fun, and stay healthy. Gross motor skills can also help form the basis for children's fine motor skills, like using their hands and fingers. Gross motor skills can also mean body awareness, reaction speed, balance, and strength. These skills help your child participate in their daily life in the best way possible.



What are “Milestones”?

Milestones for gross motor skills are important markers of your child's development. They are what children typically achieve at a certain age. Think of them as checkpoints on the path to becoming a confident and capable individual. Milestone acquisition is the process of your child reaching these checkpoints. It involves the steady and progressive development of their gross motor skills and abilities as your child grows. It is unique to each child, and varies greatly, which is why check lists should be used as a guide only by parents.

We have provided a general guideline on what you need to know about milestones, use it like a 'checklist' to see how your child is going with their milestones:



Newborn to 2 months

- Turns head to both sides while on back
- Lifts head and able to turn to both sides while on belly
- Full extension/stretching of limbs
- Can open hands/palms briefly

3 months to 6 months

- Raises head in line with trunk when pulled to sit
- Lifts head and shoulders when on belly, uses forearms for support
- Rolls from belly to back
- Holds a toy when you put it in their hand
- Pivots on belly in a circle

6 months

- Sits alone, catches self with loss of balance when sitting
- Reaches for toys independently to play when sitting
- Placed on belly, lifts head and chest up, supported by stretched out arms
- Can be held standing, takes weight on legs

12 months

- Walking with one hand held
- Pulls up to stand and stands alone for a few seconds
- Sits without support or very little support
- Crawls on hands and knees or shuffles on buttocks

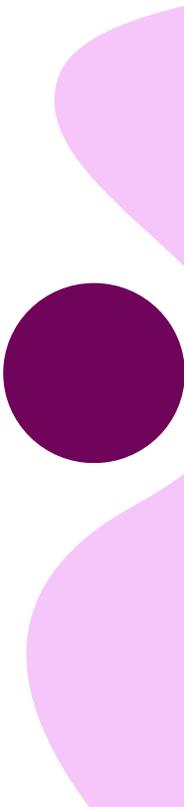


12 months to 18 months

- Crawling up stairs independently
- Stands up from floor without support
- Squats and stands back up without support or little support
- Can run, may fall easily

18 months to 2 years

- Runs and walks fairly well with no support
- Climbs on furniture to look out window
- Walks upstairs and downstairs using one hand on rail
- Makes small jumps and hops



3 years

- Balances on one foot for 3 seconds
- Jumps forward 30cm
- Catches a large ball with two hands
- Steers and rides a tricycle, uses pedals
- Kicks a ball forward

4 years

- Runs and climbs well, beginning to skip
- Can do hopscotch
- Climbs small ladders in playground
- Sits with knees crossed
- Reliable ball game skills e.g., bouncing, throwing, reliably catching balls

5 years

- Hopping 2-3 times on one foot
- Reliably catching small balls
- Jumping over objects, landing on both feet together
- Walks easily on a narrow line

6-7 years

- Runs and walks smoothly with coordinated movements
- Jumps forward and backward with good balance
- Rides a bicycle with training wheels or without
- Engages in organised sports or physical activities
- Climbs trees or complex structures with ease

8-9 years

- Climbs on various obstacles or playground equipment with balance and strength
- Run smoothly with improved coordination and speed

10+ years

- Able to swim
- Engages in outdoor activities and frequently discovers new interests
- Participates in team physical activity such as sporting games



Who Diagnoses Gross Motor Developmental Delay?

1. Paediatricians: Paediatricians are medical doctors who specialise in the health and development of children. They can diagnose and provide guidance on a wide range of developmental difficulties, including gross motor delays.

2. Occupational Therapists (OTs): Occupational therapists with expertise in paediatric care often assess and provide interventions for children with gross motor delays.

3. Physiotherapists (PTs): Physiotherapist's assessments focus on diagnosing delays. This can be difficulties with movement, balance, and overall strength.



How is Gross Motor Delay Diagnosed?

A health professional, such as a Paediatrician, Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist can diagnose gross motor difficulties through a comprehensive assessment. This may include a medical history about your child, including prenatal and birth history. Health professionals will also conduct a review of developmental milestones as well as a physical examination and observation of your child's movements.



If you Suspect your Child has Gross Motor Difficulties

If you suspect your child has Gross Motor Skill Delays or you notice several of the items in the “checklist” your child hasn’t reached, here are steps you can take:

1. Consult a Paediatrician and share your concerns about potential delays, or general observations about things you have noticed with your child’s movements.
2. Write down the developments and movements your child makes and how old they were when they acquired them. This can help your health professionals when they evaluate your child.
3. Seek an evaluation. This may be conducted by a Paediatrician, Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist.



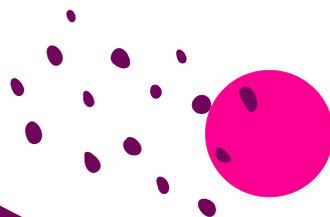
4. Seek education about Gross Motor Skill Development and how you can support your child in a positive way at home.

At Inspire Allied Health and Education Group, our Occupational Therapists assist in the assessment, diagnosis and support services for Gross Motor Delays and Disorders.

If your child has gross motor difficulties, an Occupational Therapist may suggest one or more of the following to support development.

- Create an active play environment
- Encourage outdoor play
- Provide a variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment
- Play active games like tag and hide-and-seek
- Incorporate balance activities like yoga or gymnastics
- Use obstacle courses for fun challenges
- Offer toys that promote hand-eye coordination
- Explore dance or martial arts classes
- Emphasise safe climbing opportunities
- Encourage swimming lessons
- Arrange playdates for social physical play
- Promote bike riding and skating
- Engage in family hikes or nature walks
- Promote activities that require bilateral coordination
- Incorporate jumping and hopping games
- Practice ball skills like dribbling, passing, and shooting
- Offer opportunities for free play

Understanding and addressing gross motor difficulties in children is crucial for their overall development and well-being. By recognising the importance of gross motor skills, seeking professional guidance when necessary, and actively supporting your child's physical development, you can help them build a strong foundation for a healthy and active life. Please reach out to Inspire Allied Health and Education Group to find out how we can support your child and family.





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