



Ways to Encourage Motor or Physical Development

Children grow and develop rapidly in their first five years across the four main areas of development. These areas are motor (physical), communication and language, cognitive, and social and emotional.

Motor development means the growth and strengthening of a child's bones, muscles and ability to move and touch his/her surroundings. A child's motor development falls into two categories: fine motor and gross motor.

Fine motor skills refer to small movements in the hands, wrists, fingers, feet, toes, lips and tongue. Gross motor skills involve development of muscles that enable babies to hold up their heads, sit and crawl, and eventually walk, run, jump and skip.

Parents and caregivers can help develop a child's motor skills at all ages, starting by recognizing its general sequence. It starts from the inner body, including the head, neck, arms and legs, and then moves to the outer body, such as hands, feet, fingers and toes. However, it's important to remember that each child develops differently. Here are ideas to encourage motor development at different ages.

Infant/baby:

- Practice tummy time for a few minutes, increasing the time slowly as muscles get stronger.
- Place toys nearby so your baby can move and reach for them.

Around the age of 1:

- Let your baby turn the pages of a book when you read with him/her.
- Provide toys with moving parts that stay attached.
- Play games and sing songs with movements that your child can imitate.

At 2 years old

- Encourage your toddler to build a tower of four or more blocks.
- Play parade or follow the leader with your toddler.
- Help your toddler to explore things around him/her by going on a walk or wagon ride.
- Gently roll a ball to your little one, and ask your toddler to roll it back.



From ages 3 to 5:

- When outdoors, have your child run between you and another adult or a landmark.
- Practice standing on one foot, and count to see how long he/she can stay still.
- Throw a soft, squishy ball back and forth.
- Do arts and crafts projects using playdough, scissors and small beads on a string.
- Have your child help with simple household chores.
- Give your child crayons, markers and a variety of play materials.

For more information on how to encourage a child's development, visit our [Encouraging Healthy Development page](#).