

# GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

Gross motor skills are the big movements that use the whole body and large muscle groups. These skills help children build the foundation for many other areas of development, including fine motor skills and emotional regulation. Examples of gross motor skills include rolling over, crawling, walking, running, and jumping. These are often some of the first skills infants develop.

As children practice gross motor movements, they build strength, balance, and coordination. They learn how to use both sides of their body together, and they begin to “cross the midline,” which means reaching across their body to do things like buckle a seatbelt or grab a toy on their opposite side.

## Supporting Children to Develop Gross Motor Skills

Children may need adult, motor, or sensory support. Start small and build confidence. Not all children will be able to do all the suggested activities. Let children explore their own abilities and lead play. Your role is to follow their cues. Consider increasing the challenge over time as the child gains skills.

### Activities for Infants 0 to 12 Months

- Providing tummy time experiences. This is something to start with for short periods of time, gradually building up the infant's resilience.
- Having furniture set up that allows a child to pull themselves up and cruise the room.
- Placing objects slightly out of the child's reach so they are motivated to move towards them.
- Providing items that children can push, like a walker or a laundry basket filled with toys.
- Stacking items like large blocks.
- Visiting parks with playgrounds and sliding and swinging.
- Playing on the ground or in the grass.
- Crawling over, around, and under things when it is safe.
- Tossing items into a large target, like a hula hoop on the ground.
- Setting up an obstacle course with challenges to climb over, under, and through.

### Activities for Children 12 Months and Up

- Jumping safely from furniture onto cushions or soft mats (when appropriate and supervised by an adult).
- Crawling or walking like an animal.
- Playing on the floor (e.g., leaning on elbows to do puzzles, drawing, colouring).
- Carrying heavier items in backpacks or baskets.
- Pushing or pulling items in baskets, boxes, on blankets, etc.
- Making obstacle courses.
- Visiting parks with playgrounds for sliding, swinging, and other active play.
- Playing with balls (e.g., tossing them into a target, kicking, throwing, and catching).
- Sports (e.g., swimming, soccer, gymnastics, martial arts, dance).

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Need More Support?

## Local Resources:

- Local Pediatric Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy
  - [Kootenay Kids](#)
  - [Kootenay Family Place](#)

## Resources Available at WKCCRR Library:

- Rocking Boat/Stairs
- Balance Boards
- Balance Beam
- Large Foam Blocks
- Bikes/Scooters
- Climbers

## Online Resources:

- [Gross Motor Development Chart](#)
- [45 Gross Motor Skills for Kids](#)
- [10 Gross Motor Activities with Balls](#)
- [Gross Motor Skills for Babies](#)
- [Tummy Time Ideas & Activities](#)
- [5 Simple Ways to Encourage Crawling](#)
- [Your Singular Guide to Tummy Time & Crawling](#)
- [How Much for Babies](#)