

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS INFORMATION.

- IN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS, WE LOOK AT WHAT EXACTLY GROSS MOTOR SKILLS ARE AND WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT.
- WE ALSO LOOK AT THE DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES FOR CHILDREN IN THIS AREA AND SOME OF THE CHALLENGES OF ACQUIRING AND MASTERING THESE FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS.
- FINALLY, WE LOOK AT PRACTICAL WAYS OF CONSOLIDATING AND PROGRESSING GROSS MOTOR SKILLS THROUGH SPECIFIC EXERCISES, CHILD FRIENDLY GAMES AND EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES.



Gross Motor Skills

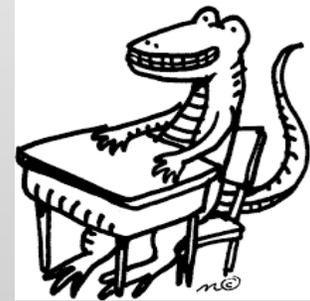
- Definition:
 - The skills and abilities required in order to control the large muscles of the body.
 - Namely the arms, legs and torso.
 - Gross motor skills are vital for strength, balance, stability and
 - co-ordination

Gross motor skills are fundamental to be able to complete more complex tasks and activities.

- **Self care:** Can you balance on one leg to put trousers on?!



- **Posture and core strength:** Being able to sit at a desk to do other activities e.g writing.



- **Endurance:** Lasting a whole day at school!! Or participating in sports activities.



Examples of Gross Motor Skill Milestones in Children.

- Rolling over
- Sitting
- Crawling
- Standing
- Walking
- Running
- Jumping
- Ball skills





Challenges for Gross Motor Skills.

- Medical problems.
- Lack of experience or practice.
- Developmental delay.
- Difficulty using both sides of the body.
(bi-lateral intergration and co-ordination)
- Decreased balance and/or core stability.
- Difficulty planning, organising and/or following instructions.
- Poor spatial (space) awareness skills.



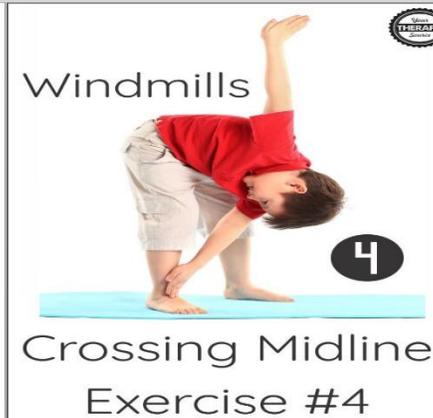
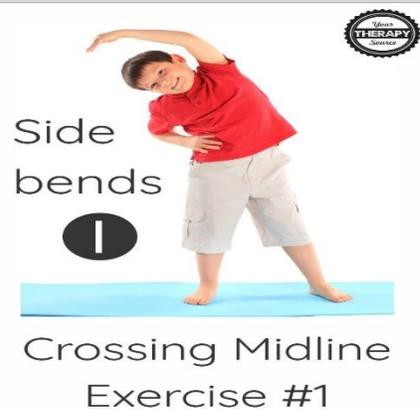
Specific Exercises

- All physical activities we do will involve gross motor skills, think dancing, trampolining, swimming, football, running on the playground. So any physical exercise will benefit the child.
- How about adding in some jumping jacks to their routine or even trying a human wheelbarrow race!!

The possibilities are endless!!



- Below are some specific exercises which target being able to reach across to the opposite side of the body known as 'crossing the midline'



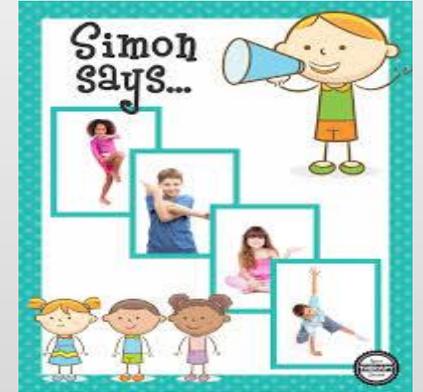
Games

- Again, there are many games that will involve physical movement that are too numerous to list.
- Here are just a few examples to get you thinking!!

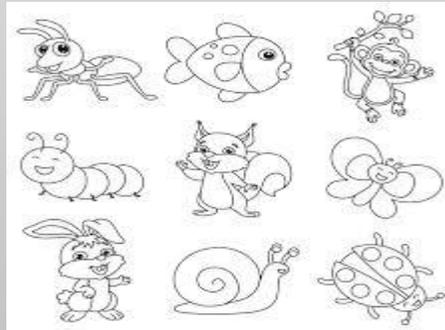
Hop scotch



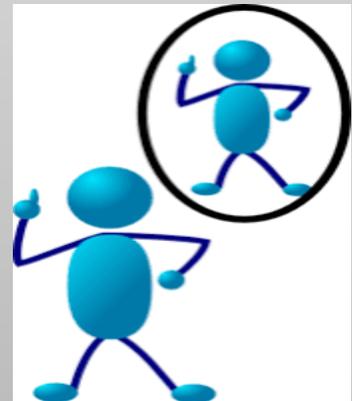
Simon Says (get very active with the commands and include instructions which cross the midline!!)



Animal walks (name an animal and the child has to move/walk as that animal would.)



Mirror game (take it in turns to create movements and shapes and see if your partner can copy them.)



Everyday activities

- Here's a great opportunity and excuse to get the children busy and useful!!
- Lots of everyday tasks and chores involve having to move those arms, legs and torso.
- They are also great for stability, balance, crossing the midline and co-ordination

Any washing or cleaning activity from hand washing (!!) to washing the dishes to cleaning the car and hoovering.

Gardening

Helping to carry shopping

Hanging out washing



.....and many more!!

As gross motor skills are sometimes evaluated in terms of strength, agility, power, reaction time and speed, tasks could be turned into games and their development measured over time. E.g how many toys can they put away in 1 minute!

Ball Games

- Easy:
 - Using both hands
 - Stationary person and target
 - Throwing, rolling (begin with underarm) and kicking
 - Large size ball (balloons are good, as large and slower moving)
- Intermediate:
 - Using dominant hand
 - Stationary person, moving target
 - Catching
 - Different ball shape and size
 - Plant foot and use same side arm
- Advanced:
 - Using opposite arm and foot
 - Bi-lateral movements
 - Moving person, moving targets
 - Any ball type
 - Overarm and underarm throwing
 - Dribbling and ball control



Advanced skills are needed for many ball sports.