

Shake, Roll and Move

Motor development is a combination of perceptual motor development, large muscle development and small muscle development. Your child's motor development will tend to follow a predictable order and sequence as he learns new skills. Even though he will follow a predictable pattern, there is a range as to when certain skills are acquired. What your child is interested in and the opportunities and experiences in his environment will play a part in his skill acquisition.

As you play with your child, offer him opportunities that help him practice and enhance this large muscle development. Your child will need space to run, jump, crawl, hop, kick, throw, and roll. These activities help strengthen his large muscles.

Your child may want to do an activity over and over with you. This is great! It is through repetition and practice that the neural pathways for motor skills are organized. This will help the activity become easier and smoother.

Because development proceeds from the head down to the toes, the large muscles support the work of the smaller muscles. By having strong shoulder and arm muscles, your child will be better able to grasp a pencil and do the paper/pencil tasks required when he goes to school.

Here are some questions you can ask your child. See if he can make his large muscles do the following movements.

- How can you make your body go all the way down to the floor?
- How far can your body go up? How high can you get?
- Can you stop halfway down?
- Can you make yourself so tiny I can hardly see you?
- Can you become as huge as a giant?
- Can you place yourself with your tummy facing the floor?
- Can you place yourself with your bottom in the air?
- Can you look behind yourself?
- At the ceiling?
- Can you roll across the room?
- Can you stretch your foot far away from you and then bring it back without touching the floor?
- How would you put one shoulder on the floor? Both shoulders?
- Can you make your elbow touch your knee?



Parents,

This information is provided to you today on behalf of a special visiting program your care provider is taking part in. If you would like to receive similar visits and learn more about how your child grows and develops, please contact your local Parents as Teachers program or call 1-866-PAT4YOU to find a program in your area, or visit our website at www.patnc.org

My Little Muscles

Your child works the muscles in her body every day. Through her play, her small muscles are strengthened when she picks up a crayon, builds a tower of blocks, and fastens her coat. As she grows, she can accomplish more difficult skills. Her small muscle development follows a predictable order and sequence. The experiences and activities she has will influence the rate at which these skills are acquired.

As you observe your child, watch how she uses her small muscles. Remember to offer her opportunities to practice and enhance this part of her development. Offer opportunities in:

Everyday activities

- Dressing. Taking her clothes off will come before her putting articles of clothing on. Your child uses her small muscles when she pulls her socks off and when she eventually zips her jacket.
- Playing with toys that snap and pull apart
- Pointing at pictures and turning the pages of books
- Pouring and wiping up spills
- Using eating utensils that are the appropriate for her development

Cutting

Cutting is a skill that uses small muscles. Your child will follow a progression with her cutting skills. Encourage this school readiness skill by:

- Choosing scissors that are the right size, appropriate to her development

- Letting her cut play dough first, then progressing to cutting strips of stiff (bond weight) paper. Next move to cutting around the outside of a paper plate (fringing), then she will be able to cut and follow along a straight line.

Writing

Writing is a skill that requires lots of practice doing a variety of activities that use the small muscles. When your child rolls and pinches play dough, strings beads, and fingerpaints, she is working the muscles necessary for writing.

- Encourage her to use a variety of sizes and types of writing instruments such as markers, crayons of all sizes, pencils, and pens.
- Let her “write” out the bills, a shopping list

Speaking

The muscles in the mouth are considered small muscles. These muscles are important in forming correct speech sounds. Try these activities with your child:

- Blowing bubbles
- Sucking through a straw
- Whispering, changing volume

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Moving and Grooving...Learning through Movement

Your child learns through all her senses—hearing, touching, tasting, seeing, smelling, and balance. Learning occurs through her sensory input. Sensory input works to give her body information about muscle movements and about the force her muscles exert.

This sensory input gives her body information about its position in space and about her body's sense of balance. How your child moves, how she perceives her surroundings and her ability to learn are all interrelated and interdependent.

Offer your child different movement opportunities to enhance her perceptual motor development. Give her opportunities to explore the concept of balance. Let her:

- Help you rearrange a room in your house by pushing, pulling, and tugging the furniture
- Walk on the curb, the lines on the sidewalk or driveway, or a homemade balance beam
- Spin
- Swing
- Hang upside down
- Roll down a hill
- Move with a hula hoop
- Dance with scarves or streamers

As she becomes accomplished with these skills, encourage her to put two movements together. See if she can:

- Throw a ball at a target as they are walking on a line
- Rub their tummy and pat their head
- Clap and jump up and down

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