**Gross Motor Planning Activities**

Motor planning is the ability to think of, organize and carry out an unfamiliar action or sequence of actions. Once a skill has been learned, it no longer requires conscious motor planning. A child with motor planning difficulties often has to plan a task over and over because it does not “sink in” and become spontaneous.

Basic motor planning and motor skill development require a clear perception of how the body is designed and how it functions as a mechanical unit. Sensory input from touch, joint position and movement must be organized into a clear “picture” of the body. The brain refers to this picture to move the body accurately.

Start with activities giving input through the senses, particularly the sense of balance, of touch and of where body parts are in space. The following are a few ideas:

* Rolling on floor to pick up objects placed some distance apart to complete a puzzle.
* Animal walks e.g. crab, bear etc. These can be done to music with the child ‘freezing’ in position with music stops.
* Windmills- the child twirls around on the spot with arms outstretched, first one way then the other.

1. Pass the ball. This can be played with two children or if there is only one child the child can put it in a box behind him/her.
2. Tug of war game. This can be done sitting, kneeling or standing.
3. Trapeze. Hanging from a trapeze and swinging.
4. Wheelbarrows. Walking on hands. Held at hips initially and grade to holding further down the legs.
5. Foot volleyball. Gently throw ball and child kicks it back. This can be done with alternating feet or two feet together.
6. Crawling or commando over uneven surfaces.
7. What walk? Play a game of walking in various ways i.e., using knee of one leg and foot of other/walking with knees slightly bent/walking without taking feet off floor.
8. Bear, crab, duck walking.
9. Ask the child to move like different animals e.g: jumping like a frog, swimming like a fish wriggling like a worm etc.
10. ‘Simon Says’ games copying body postures.
11. Statues. The child runs, dances, skips, jumps around in time to music. When the music stops the child ‘freezes’ in that position.
12. Charades. One child mimes a task and others have to guess what it is.
13. Follow the leader.
14. Stepping stones-scatter a path of hoops on the floor, the hoops are steps and the floor is the river. The child needs to get across the river by only stepping in the hoops.
15. Knee soccer. Roll a ball and the child must push it back with his ball.
16. Ball catch. Catching a small ball in a cut down detergent bottle.
17. Ball games with feet. Dribble a ball around targets, kick at targets, stop ball with feet.
18. Hoop jumps. Jump in and out into the hoop, lift hoop over the head and place in front. Repeat.
19. Bouncing a ball with arms outstretched.
20. Swimming. Kicking whilst holding a board, front crawl.
21. Art projects that require assembling parts to create an object. This challenges the child’s ability to develop strategies for organising parts as they relate to the whole.
22. Twister game.
23. Following a map. Draw a map of the house with treasures placed in various rooms, then find.
24. Paper folding games.
25. Walking around chairs. Walk around two chairs while hitting a balloon to keep in the air.
26. Yoga poses
27. Activities involving sequences of movement are particularly useful in developing motor planning. Start with simple sequences, gradually make them more complex. Where possible involve the child in making up patterns.
28. Clapping patterns.

* left hand on left knee, hands together, right hand on right knee, hands together;
* Left hand on right knee, hands together, right hand on left knee, hands together;
* Clap two hands onto knees, then two hands together etc
* Tap right foot on floor, clap hands together, tap left foot on floor etc.

1. Patterns with a ball
   * Bounce ball, clap between each bounce;
   * Toss ball, clap and catch, toss ball, catch in left hand, bounce ball catch in right hand;
   * Bounce ball, throw up and clap before catching it;
   * Throw ball against wall and turn around before catching it;
   * Bounce ball along a line marked on the ground using left and right hands in sequence.
2. Jumping patterns
   * Child imitates a sequence of movements produced by the adult e.g: jump, clap, jump, clap;
   * Jump, jump, clap, jump, jump, clap etc.
   * Mark a cross on the ground, mark each quadrant with a number. The child jumps in patterns of number e.g; 1-2-3-4-1
   * Variations on this- patterns of jumping involving two feet then one foot.
3. Patterns of hopping and skipping e.g; hopscotch