

Gross Motor Skills Development for 2-4 Year Olds

What Are Gross Motor Skills?

- Gross motor movements involve large muscle groups, such as the muscles of the arms, legs, and trunk. Gross motor skills are needed for actions like walking, running, reaching, and even just sitting upright. It is important for children to develop gross motor skills because they aid in a child's awareness of where their body is in space and many of the skills act as precursors to more intricate movements, known as fine motor skills.

(Pathways, 2021)

What Should You do if Your Child is Not Reaching Milestones?

- If you notice that your child is not reaching developmental milestones on time, it is important to speak with your pediatrician to determine the cause of the delay. This could indicate a developmental condition, but many times there is nothing to worry about because there is a lot of variation in when children meet these milestones.

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021)

What Gross Motor Milestones Should a Baby be Reaching?

- At 2 Years Old a Child Can:

- Walk and Run Fairly Well
- Walk up and down stairs with two feet on each step
- Jumps in place

- At 3 Years Old a Child Can:

- Balance on one foot for a short time
- Jump forward 1-2 feet
- Ride a tricycle

- At 4 Years Old a Child Can:

- Hop well on one foot
- Catch a ball reliably
- Play hopscotch

(Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU, n.d.)

Gross Motor Activities For 2-4 Year Olds

Developing your child's gross motor skills can be both easy and fun! You just need to know where to start. Here is a list of simple activities and games you can play with your little one to make them a gross motor expert!

Tightrope Walking

- For this activity you can either use sidewalk chalk outside or painter's tape inside. Use the chalk or tape to create lines on the floor or ground for your child to "tightrope walk" on. They need to balance on the lines without falling off the "tightrope". You can create a straight line or different patterns to make it more challenging. This activity will help to improve your child's balance, coordination, and core strength.

Bug Squish

- For this activity, you will need sidewalk chalk and an outdoor space to draw with it. Take the chalk and draw bugs on the ground of all different sizes. Have your child jump from bug to bug and stomp on them to "squish" them. This activity will help with strengthening your child's core and leg muscles while also improving coordination and balance.

Popcorn Pop

- For this activity, you will need a small blanket and some balls or rolled up socks. Lay the blanket flat on the ground and lay several balls or rolled up socks in the middle; these will act as your popcorn. Grab one end of the blanket and have your child hold the other. Shake the ends of the blanket up and down to make the "popcorn" fly everywhere. This will increase your child's core and arm strength.

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, July 28). *Concerned about your child's development?*. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/concerned.html>.
- Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU. (n.d.). *Gross motor skills: Birth to 5 years*. <https://www.chrichmond.org/therapy-services/occupational-therapy/developmental-milestones/gross-motor-skills-birth-to-5-years>.
- Pathways.org. (2021, April 20). *Developmental milestones for all ages*. <https://pathways.org/all-ages/milestones/>.