



WHAT ARE LOCOMOTOR SKILLS??....

Source: Great Schools

Skipping isn't just child's play, it's crucial for development. Sure, it's never easy to keep exercising, but by starting early you could inspire a lifetime of movement.

Locomotor skills are the basic ways to move, the building blocks of coordination. Help your child practice these important skills: walking, galloping, jumping, hopping, side-sliding, leaping and skipping. Start gradually with walking (the easiest) and steadily advance to skipping (the most difficult).

This is a perfect transition activity, during a play date when things aren't going well. Put on some favorite music and turn the living room into an exercise studio. Most are intense exercises, so allow rest time between skills. Most children naturally build up their skills over time just getting around their neighborhood. Below are some ways to work on improving your child's locomotor skills:

- *Walking*: Use smooth, straight steps with arms swinging gently in opposition of feet. Practice different kinds of walks: low with bent legs, high on tippy toes, fast like a robot, or slow like moving through honey.
- *Galloping*: One foot is the leader, and the other foot follows behind. Don't forget to do both sides!
- *Jumping*: With feet close together, push off with both feet and land on both feet. Can you make the landing quiet? How high can you jump? How many times in a row? This is a good time to try jumping rope.
- *Hopping*: With one foot on the ground, push with toes. How fast can you hop? How slowly? Is one side harder than the other?
- *Side-sliding*: Move sideways with one foot leading (a sideways gallop). Have your kid spread his or her arms wide and get some air in the middle of the slide.
- *Skipping*: March with knees high; each time one knee is in the air, hop on the other foot — step/hop, step/hop, step/hop.

Teaching Locomotor Skills to Children

You must recognize and understand the importance of play in early childhood as it affect the physical as well as mental health of children. To develop good locomotor skills, you need to encourage your children to play outdoor games, such as football, cycling, badminton, etc., with their friends. This will help them learn from their peers and will expose them to different kind of physical movements. Give them a jump rope or a ball to play with. They will learn jumping, kicking, catching the ball more efficiently.

FUN AND GAMES FOR YOUR CHILD...

TWO YEAR OLDS

NEIGHBORHOOD WALKING

Why not take the whole family out after dinner for a walk around the neighborhood? Walking is actually a form of locomotion in which the body weight is transferred alternately from the ball (toe) of one foot to the heel of the other. At times one foot is on the ground and during a brief phase both feet are on the ground. There is no time when both feet are off the ground. Who knew that a simple walk around your own neighborhood could actually improve your child's locomotor skills?

PRESCHOOLER

WILD HORSES

It's time to get the whole family in the background for some good ole galloping around horse fun! Why not pretend that everyone is a horse (each family member can name their horse and chose a color or size for the horse) and see who can gallop the fastest, the slowest or even the longest? Galloping is a form of locomotion which is a combination of an open step by the leading foot and a closed step by the trailing foot. The same foot leads throughout. The rhythm is uneven.

OLDER

SPUD

This outdoor game is a lot of fun. Every player gets a number and crowds around the person who is "it" for that round. "It" then tosses the ball straight up and the other players run away. As the ball reaches the top of its toss, "it" calls out the number of one of the other players and then runs away also. The player whose number was called must run back and catch the ball (or chase after it if it is bouncing around). Once that person has the ball, they yell, "Spud!" Then everyone else must freeze. The person with the ball must try to hit one of the players with the ball. If they do, that new person gets a letter (first S, then P, then U, then D) and is now "it." If they miss, the person who threw the ball is "it" for the next round.

Locomotor skills are those motor skills in which the feet move the body from one place to another. They are (roughly in order of how children learn them):

- Walking
- Running
- Hopping
- Jumping
- Skipping
- Galloping
- Sliding (a sideways gallop)
- Leaping

Most children learn to walk at approximately one year old, and to run, hop, and jump at two. They begin to master galloping, skipping, sliding, and leaping at about age three. Children need some instruction to learn these skills and lots of opportunity to practice them (but most will think that is fun).

SKILL SPOT PAGE...

In Playball we use imagery as part of our teaching technique. This week ask your child about the squirrels who threw the acorns out of the trees and into their nests.

WEEKLY SKILL

We will practice
SOCCER THROW IN

(Among many other things this week.)

Hand\Foot Position

Both hands grip the ball on the side and slightly towards the back.

Stance

“Front-On” stance with feet apart and legs slightly bent. Ball is held with both hands behind the neck.

Head Position

The head is facing forwards in the direction of the throw.

The ball is now thrown by the student.

Action

As the weight is transferred forward, the pupil steps forward with the left foot.

Contact\Release Point

The release is above and in front of the head.

Finish

Both hands follow the direction of the ball.



LIFE SKILL

We are practicing
COMMUNICATION
(Among many other things this week.)

We will be
concentrating on
using our words
when things don't
go right in class.
Talk TO
the coach!

The skills are taught appropriately for whichever hand preference your child has.
The size of the ball, and technical difficulty, is adapted according to the age of the child.

SPORTY AT HOME



Our Sporty at Home section focuses on activities that you can do with your children at home in order to keep them right on track! We'll have different activities each month!

Brushing your teeth, buttoning your shirt, zipping, snapping, tying. You might not think about it, but your fingers are in charge of a lot of your self-help tasks.

Without adequate strength and coordination in your fingers, these tasks would be difficult, if not impossible.

If your child has fine-motor delays, no doubt you've experienced his/her frustration with morning routines. A child prides himself on a growing independence. When this doesn't happen as easily or as fast for him/her as for his peers, a child will experience frustration, embarrassment, and even shame.

Improving these skills involves practice. Often these skills are boring and they're hard for the child with fine-motor delays.

That's one reason why the child can't complete them. They should be expected to try when appropriate, however, with your help.

Activity Name

Strengthening Clothespins

Materials

Clothespins, Construction Paper, Container, Number Dice

Skills

Eye-Hand Coordination, Finger Strength, Visual Perception

Purpose

This fun activity promotes the child's finger strength through the play with clothespins. The child will also strengthen color matching skills.

Description

For this activity you will need colored clothespins in 4 different colors or if you have wooden clothespins you can color them or mark them with 4 colors. The colors should match the color of the construction paper. Cover the containers with construction paper. Let the child choose a color and then roll the dice. The child is then asked to place the clothespins on the edge of the matching colored container. If the dice rolled 1, have the child place 1 clothespin on the edge of the container. If the dice rolled 2, use 2 clothespins. Etc. This activity can also be done in a group as part of a game where each child has 1 container and is playing to get as many clothespins on his container in an allotted time.