

A Moving Child Is a Learning Child

Infants and toddlers learn as they move around their environment. Some children need a little extra encouragement to develop key motor skills. Here are some ideas to help you encourage more movement in daily activities and routines.



Reach, grasp, and grab.

- Hold toys where an infant can see them and encourage her to reach for the toy.
- Say, “So big!” and encourage your child to raise her arms high.
- Dance and wave your arms with scarves, bells, or shakers.
- Encourage children to feed themselves with age-appropriate finger foods.
- Fill baskets and containers with toys and encourage your child to reach in and grasp.

Roll, scoot, crawl, and dance.

- Encourage rolling, crawling, scooting, cruising, walking, running, and dancing.
- Help them play in many positions: sitting, kneeling, standing, and laying on their backs and tummies.
- Play some music and have a dance party with your child.
- Encourage children to bend, reach, and squat by placing toys in low baskets and on higher surfaces.
- Help children climb a pile of sofa cushions, push a laundry basket, or climb in and out of a large box.

Kick, stand, cruise, and walk.

- Sing nursery rhymes that encourage children to be aware of their feet, such as “This Little Piggy.”
- Encourage your child to cruise along the length of a sofa or low table by putting toys on it.
- Show children how to walk in different ways: tiptoes, backward, stomping, jumping, hopping, etc.
- Help children explore ramps, stairs, and different surfaces by holding their hands and being prepared to catch children so they are safe.
- Help your child move her legs through water in the bath or pool.

Move indoors, outdoors—anywhere!

- Playgrounds, sidewalks, fields, and natural spaces all provide room for movement.
- Indoor shopping malls, community gymnasiums, or the library children’s department may have spaces for moving when the weather keeps you inside.
- Your home can be rearranged to provide safe floor spaces for infants and toddlers to creep, crawl, and roll. For example, pushing a coffee table out of the way can provide more open floor space.
- “Secret places,” such as under a table or behind the sofa, are places your child may enjoy crawling. Then he can surprise you with a game of “peekaboo.”

Work with your EI team to choose strategies that target the skills your child needs to work on.

 For more information, visit the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse at <http://eiclearinghouse.org>

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