

# Physical development

*“Physical activity is vital in children’s all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child’s strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.” EYFS Statutory Framework, 2021.*

In Early Years we nurture children’s strong need and desire to be physically active which builds the foundations for other areas of their development by:

- Building children’s strength, stamina, balance, co-ordination and dexterity
- Developing a range of large and small movements which they can control
- Improving and refining children’s control and manipulation of a variety of tools
- Instilling a sense of confidence in children’s own physical abilities enabling them to negotiate spaces
- Promoting independence by teaching them to make decisions and choices that will keep them healthy and safe

**INTENT:** We want children to become aware of their bodies and the changes that occur during physical activity. We want children to be able to confidently and independently access sports equipment within the environment. We want children to develop the pre-writing skills and strength ready for writing and confidence to use a range of tools. During the Reception year, we want to build on the work of families, nurseries and pre-schools to ensure all children develop healthy attitudes and the appropriate physical skills to succeed in their journey through school.

## Gross Motor Development

### We know:

- Core strength helps children to balance and use my limbs independently
- Big muscles need to be strong to support the smaller muscles in children’s bodies
- Exercise will build children’s strength and stamina
- That being able to cross the midline helps both sides of our brains to connect
- Both sides of children’s bodies need to work together in a co-ordinated way

## Fine Motor Development

### We know:

- That children’s wrists and fingers need to be strong to manipulate small tools and objects
- How to strengthen muscles to help develop a comfortable pincer grip

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Adults have a sound knowledge and deep understanding of physical development and the key aspects of gross and fine motor skills. They know that fine motor development relies on children having well developed gross motor strength and recognise the strong links between physical development and the ability to control and manipulate writing tools. Within the environment adults actively encourage children to build their strength, stamina, balance, co-ordination and dexterity.

**Physical Development** is valued and promoted through:

- Weekly PE and dance sessions.
- Capitalising on transition times to promote gross motor skills e.g. stand in the line on one leg.
- Daily Dough Gym and Funky Finger sessions to strengthen wrist and finger strength, finger isolation and pincer grip.
- Weekly fine motor enhancements within the provision that develop wrist and finger strength, finger isolation and pincer grip.
- Equipping the provision with different vertical surfaces to promote core strength, wrist strength and crossing the midline.
- Situating Tool Stations within the provision offering a wide variety of mark making tools and equipment e.g. hole-punches, staples, treasury tags and paperclips to support the development of muscle strength and the control and manipulation of real tools.
- Providing authentic resources throughout the provision e.g. real kitchen equipment.
- Using the outdoor area daily for Physical Development where small apparatus is organised, displayed and available for children to use independently.
- Equipping the outdoor area with a base layer of resources to promote balance and upper body strength e.g. balance bikes, scooters, buckets and weighty objects.

**IMPACT:** Pre-School children will be active and understand why physical activity is important to their well-being. They will enjoy being outside, creating games, taking risks and pushing their bodies to become stronger. We will monitor the impact to ensure children are 'on track' in the developmental age band 3 -4 years. Reception children will show control over their movements, including how they control tools for writing, be able to cross the mid-line, throw, catch and kick a ball and negotiate obstacles and space safely.