

Upper Body Development (Gross Motor Skills)

Gross Motor Skills involve the large muscles of the body. They enable us to be able to walk, kick, sit upright, lift, and throw a ball. A person's gross motor skills depends on both muscle tone and strength. Developing gross motor skills is a foundation skill. If practised, fine motor skills will be easier to learn.

Upper Body Development includes the neck, shoulders, upper arms, upper chest area.

Note: Most children who do not enjoy writing at school, often have poor upper body control, cannot support their body weight by their hands and avoid such activities.

Why do we need to work on this?

In generations gone by children developed gross motor skills naturally in their daily play. Today, for many reasons whether it be protective society, sedentary lifestyles or time limitations, safety barriers, children are no longer having these experiences daily. As a result activities involving large muscle movements are happening less and less in child's play.

How do we develop our large muscles?

Upper Body Development

Maturation Process: Top Down and Inside Out, Big Muscles to Small Muscles

- 1: Head control is gained
- 2: The shoulder and upper arms gain strength
- 3: The rest of the upper body and trunk
- 4: The hips and pelvis
- 5: Legs



Active movement experiences help to develop strong muscles in the shoulders, arms, hands and fingers. Tummy Time: essential from birth, allows baby to push up on hands eventually and extend arms. As a child grows, weight bearing activities using the arms are most beneficial.

Activities to help develop upper body strength

- Ropes – climbing, swinging
- Monkey Bars – brachiating, hanging, swinging
- Animal Walks – crab, bear, monkey etc
- Twing
- Wheelbarrows
- Scooter boards
- Parachute games
- Crawling/tunnels
- Ladder Climbing
- Row row your boat
- Tug of War