

MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Book
Number 5



MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services • Early Childhood Intervention and Education Branch

PARENT HELPER...The Series

The Maryland State Department of Education publishes a series of PARENT HELPER handbooks covering a variety of skill development areas.

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- BOOK 2, Parent Helper: **Communication**
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- BOOK 4, Parent Helper: **Motor Development**
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Table of Contents

Introduction to Motor Development	2
Development of Motor Skills	3
Developmental Milestones Chart	5
The Discovery Process.....	7
Your Child's First Learning Environment.....	8
Suggested Activities–	
For Infants.....	8
For Toddlers	10
For Preschoolers.....	12
Activities for Children with Disabilities.....	14

Introduction

PARENT HELPER: Motor Development

Parents are the primary teachers of their children in the early years of life. The PARENT HELPER: **Motor Development** handbook is one in a series of publications written specially for parents.

This handbook presents information concerning the communication process, developmental sequences of communicative behaviors and activities that can help create an atmosphere or climate for meaningful communication between parent and child.

Because no two children are exactly alike, and since some children may face special challenges, this PARENT HELPER handbook simply offers broad and general guidelines. Each child's developmental level will influence how fast, how much, and how well he processes information. Working together, parents, educators and other professionals can share knowledge, creativity, and commitment for making the most of each young child's development.

Many suggestions found in this handbook have come from parents, others have been successfully used by teachers and other early care and education providers. It is hoped that the suggested activities will assist you in creating a secure, loving environment which will encourage your child's language development.



From Here to There...

What are Motor Skills?

The development of motor skills provides the basis from which sensorimotor, cognitive, language and self-help skills evolve. Some motor involvement is found in every behavior that a child exhibits. Babies are born with reflexes—automatic reactions that begin our interactive process with the environment. For example, an infant sucks when his lips are touched, turns her head when her cheek is stroked, moves his entire body in response to a loud noise, and grasps objects placed in her hand.

These reflexes are the foundation on which more complex motor skills are built. Learning begins to take place as the infant touches, reaches for, mouths and handles objects. Movement becomes more purposeful and goal directed. Thus, motor development is the result of physiological maturation and environmental learning, both of which are essential.

There are two forms of motor development:

1. Gross Motor

2. Fine Motor

Distinction between the two groups is based upon the muscles involved in carrying out the particular action or activity.

Gross Motor Skills

Gross motor skills involve use of the large muscles for activities like sitting, crawling and walking. Gross motor development proceeds downward from the head to the feet. Thus, a baby first learns to lift and turn his head. Then control and coordination of the shoulders occurs, followed by development of the trunk and control of legs.

Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills involve the use of small muscles for activities like following objects with the eyes, holding eating utensils, buttoning shirts and drawing with crayons. Fine motor proceeds from the midline of the body to the fingers and toes. Thus, a baby learns to focus and follow moving objects with her eyes before she can purposefully manipulate toys or pick up small objects with her fingertips.

The Sequential Manner of Motor Skill Development

Motor development occurs in a sequential manner where each new skill is built upon the skill that came before. For example, a child typically first learns to bear weight, then stands with support, and finally stands alone. The rate of development for children varies, but the sequence remains fairly consistent.

In addition to following a sequential pattern, motor skills overlap one another. While a child is

mastering a particular skill, he experiments with components of a new, succeeding one. Thus, acquisition of each skill involves a process of experimentation and practice.

Finally, motor behavior is characterized by refinement of gross movement patters from general and massive into more directed, isolated and controlled movement. For example, a two-month-old child simply thrusts her arms in excitement while playing. By six months, that same child may purposefully reach forward and grasp a toy to play with.

Nurturing Baby's Motor Development

Caregivers can foster motor development by providing varying experiences in which young children can explore and learn about their world. In addition to providing a stimulating environment, it is very important that you carry and place your baby in a variety of positions that encourage interaction with persons and objects.

Frequently changing your baby's position will stimulate interest in reaching, touching, and exploring. Providing a variety of positions for short periods of time can help strengthen a child's muscles. Exploration provides baby with more information about the world around him.

Developmental Milestones

As your child moves from infancy to being a toddler, curiosity about the environment grows. With the skill of walking comes the ability to go after whatever is attractive. Encourage your child's curiosity as increased independence will allow him to explore interesting things. Display pleasure and satisfaction as your child makes new discoveries. Smiles and praises from you will encourage your child's learning.

The following **Developmental Milestones** offer a general sequence and age range for motor skills development in young children. You may find this information helpful in planning activities that are appropriate for the development level of your child.

As you observe your child's development, remember that no two children are alike, so your child may develop at a different rate than what is suggested here.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your child's early care and education providers.

Developmental Milestones - MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

	Fine Motor	Gross Motor
0 to 3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefly holds rattle when placed in hand Watches movement of own hands Uses eyes to follow an object moving slowly up, down, or across 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turns from side to back Turns head to either side when lying on stomach or back Waves hands and kicks feet while lying on stomach Holds head steady in upright position while being held above an adult's shoulders
3 to 6 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holds hand together at midline Brings hands together at midline to hold an object Bangs objects in play Uses fingers and plan to grasp objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pushes up from floor to bear weight on forearms Rolls from stomach to back Reaches for feet and brings them to own mouth Pushes self to a sitting position and sits alone momentarily
6 to 9 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Claps hands Use raking motion to obtain an object Reaches for and obtains objects that are 10 to 12 inches away Transfers objects from one hand to the other Rotates wrist to manipulate toy or object 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sits and reaches for toys Outstretches arms for protection when in a sitting or upside down position Crawls forward with stomach on floor Assists in pulling self to a standing positions
9 to 12 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purposefully releases an object Uses a neat pincer grasp Bangs spoon or cup Makes mark on paper with pencil or crayon Pokes at objects with index finger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creeps forward on hands and knees Walks holding onto furniture Walks with support Lets go of support and stand alone Pulls self to a standing position using stable support
12 to 18 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Places cubes in a cup Holds crayon and scribbles on paper Stacks one block on top of another Builds tower of 3 to 4 cubes Places 1/4-inch pegs in a board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kneels unassisted Walks alone Creeps up steps Creeps down steps backwards Stands alone in the middle of the floor



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to
♥
18
★
Months
♥

0 through 18 months

Developmental Milestones - MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

		Gross Motor
18 to 25 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imitates a vertical stroke using a crayon • Manipulates an object with fingers and thumb • Places 3 shapes in a formboard • Turns pages of a book one by one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks up and down steps with support • Pushes/pulls a light object • Runs length of the room without falling • Picks up a toy from the floor while standing
24 to 36 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imitates drawing horizontal/vertical strokes • Snips paper using blunt scissors • Complete formboard of 5 or more pieces • Tries to button/unbutton large buttons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks up and down steps holding the rail • Kicks ball forward • Throws ball overhead • Balances momentarily on one foot • Pedals a tricycle • Runs without falling
36 to 48 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strings 1/2-inch bead • Copies a circle • Snips along a straight 1/4-inch line with a continuous opening and closing motion • Plus together objects requiring eye-hand coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catches a bounced ball • Walks up and down step alternating feet without support • Walks heel-to-toe along a straight line • Stands momentarily on balance beam without assistance • Throws ball overhead-
48 to 60 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates hand preference • Cuts out a circle and other simple shapes • Copies circles and other simple shapes from examples • Draws stick figures • Prints capital letters and simple words, some letter/word reversals are evident • Uses appropriate hand placement while cutting and writing • Prints numerals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 • Laces own shoes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hops on one foot • Catches a ball with both hands • Walks on tiptoes for 10 feet • Kicks rolling ball toward a target • Gallops and skips while alternating feet • Jumps rope • Roller skates • Hops 2 to 3 yards forward on one foot • Runs with arms swinging opposite to feet • Jumps on toes from a height of 12 inches

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to

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18

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Months

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18 through 60 months

The Discovery Process...

How Children Learn



Exploring. Experimenting.

Children discover the world through exploration. They move about exploring and discovering new faces, places, and things. Your child needs to handle different kinds of objects and figure out how things work, where pieces fit, and why things act in expected ways. Trial and error discoveries can lead to developing ways of generalizing about objects, events, and problems.

Playing.

Children receive pleasure and satisfaction and are motivated to explore as they play and learn about themselves. They are able to practice activities like manipulating objects and helping with household chores.

Adapting.

As children encounter new events, they relate them to remembered experiences. Earlier learning is slightly changed each time to fit new experiences. This is how your child's knowledge is broadened.

Touching. Tasting. Smelling. Hearing. Seeing.

Children experience the world through their senses. They smell sweet vanilla, taste salty crackers, touch soft kittens, hear loud bangs, and see brightly colored ribbons. When given attention and gentle stimulation from people and objects, young children begin learning and developing.

Imitating Others.

Children learn by watching and imitating others. They develop new skills by first observing others then imitating the actions they observe. Repeating imitated actions eventually leads to mastery.

Practicing.

Children learn by doing activities over and over in all kinds of situations. Each time a child learns a new skill, she tries it again in various positions and with different objects. Repeating actions eventually leads to mastery.





Make Home Your Child's First Learning Environment

Since your child's first learning environment is the home, you will want to make it a caring and stimulating place that is responsive to your child's needs and interests. The following ideas and activities are suggestions which may be helpful in creating a responsive learning environment. The suggestions are grouped for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Use your child's developmental level rather than her chronological age to guide your activity choices. Additionally, do not think that you must introduce all of the activities at one time in the sequence listed within each grouping. Personalize these suggestions in ways that make sense for your child and family.

Suggested Activities for Infants

Provide experiences that help develop the senses.

1. Place colorful objects near the child. Looking and seeing are the first ways an infant learns about the world.
2. Hang a brightly colored mobile above your child's crib.

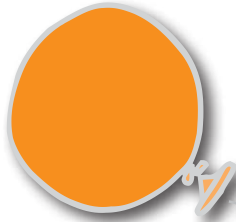
Stimulate your child's senses.

3. Change the position of your child's crib, playpen and objects around her to keep her interested and learning.
4. Use brightly colored, visually stimulating sheets and blankets in your baby's crib.
5. Provide a variety of toys, keeping in mind that infants are more likely to be interested in objects that move.
6. Play soft music to provide a pleasant stimulation for music.

7. Provide opportunities for your child to be propped in a secure sitting position able to see everyday activities. Move your child around with you from room to room as well as near a window or door so that he can experience different environments.
8. Limit the restriction of clothing, shoes, and socks so that your child is free to move and experience various sensations to the skin.
9. Expose your child to various smells such as baby powder, lotions, and colognes. Include smells outside and throughout the house such as flowers, coffee, spices, and powdered juice mixes.

Stimulate your child's senses.

10. Develop your child's body awareness by touching and feeling. Rubbing your child with various textures over different body parts can be effective, especially during diapering and bathing. Try textures like corduroy, fur, and satin. Be sure to talk to your child and name various body parts.



Reminder: Choose activities that are appropriate for your child's level of development.

11. Dress your child in brightly colored mittens and booties with bells attached. This will make your child more aware of his hands and feet while reinforcing body movements.
12. Make hand puppets from material scraps and cut with pinking shears to avoid raveling.

Keep playthings large enough so the child is not able to swallow them.

13. Let your child enjoy exploring objects of various textures by mouthing them. Household items such as plastic containers, teflon pot scrubbers and woven pot holders are all safe items for a child to use.
14. Visit your local pet shop for textured toys used for puppies and kittens.

Provide the infant with stimuli to motivate movement of eyes, head, body, arms and legs.

15. Save bright, curly ribbons and bows from presents as colorful playthings for your child.
16. Fill an inner tube or box with rice, leaves, grass cuttings, sand or even parboiled macaroni. Place your child on top to feel various textures. Securely position your child in various ways such as on her back or in an upright position.
17. Mix a box of instant pudding and refrigerate until chilled. Have a finger painting party with various flavored puddings. Try other foods like oatmeal, cottage cheese or yogurt.

18. Use facial expressions while talking to your child. Show different expressions he can imitate like smiling, frowning, opening, and closing your mouth.

Respond to your baby's need to be held.

19. Remember that babies need a lot of holding, cuddling and gentle rocking. They become upset when handled in a rough way.
20. Be aware of proper positioning for your child. Consult a physical therapist for suggestions.
21. Support the newborn's head at all times. Place your hand securely behind the back of the head and neck when your child is being lifted or moved.
22. Place your baby in various positions—on his stomach, back and side—to strengthen his muscles.
23. Avoid forcing your child's body into any position. Offer help by rotating or gently stroking the muscles to help relax your child.
24. Consult a physical therapist if you notice your child having difficulty reaching and grabbing, holding her head upright as her body is moved, or keeping her legs straight when placed in a standing position.

Encourage movement

25. Try not to limit your child to a crib or playpen for long periods of time.
26. Place a mobile or object near your infant's hands or legs to give focus for his random arm movements. Various types of wind chimes work nicely.
27. Perform simple action songs and finger plays like "So Big" and "Pat-a-Cake" that require hand gestures and movements. Various types of wind chimes work nicely.
28. Talk quietly to your baby. She will often respond by turning her head.
29. Play "peek-a-boo" games.

Choose safe toys that encourage play and learning.

30. Place appropriate sized objects in the palm of your baby's hand.
31. Make a crib gym by attaching a towel or a strong piece of rope across the width of your baby's crib. Attach safe, sturdy objects such as bracelets and wooden clothes pins. Encourage your child to reach, hit, grasp and pull.
32. Cut fruits and vegetables into 1/2-inch and 1/4-inch cubes and encourage your child to pick them up by grasping with his forefingers and thumb.
33. Use an inflatable innertube for your child to sit in while taking a bath.

Suggested Activities for Toddlers

Prepare for the age of exploration.

1. Children need to touch and handle objects in order to learn. Be sure to "toddler proof" your home to the maximum extent possible so that your child is not hurt as she moves about.
2. Move poisons, glass, and sharp objects out of reach. Place tape over electrical outlets. Place a gate at the top of stairways to keep your child from falling down the steps.
3. Place decals on windows and sliding glass doors.

Use household items for exploration and learning opportunities.

4. When you're in the kitchen, give your child some cans/packages of food and encourage her to build and stack.
5. Set aside a low cabinet for your child to use. Fill it with plastic eating utensils, bowls, empty cans, mixing spoons, and old pots with lids.
6. Encourage movement with push-pull toys. If your child is experiencing difficulty walking, add extra weight to a baby carriage or mini-pushcart to provide greater stability.
7. Give your child a backpack or carrying bag to wear and carry toys and other belongings along with him.
8. Wrap objects in paper or foil. Have your child practice unwrapping them.

Use simple materials and activities available in the home.

9. Set up an obstacle courses by placing furniture and objects around an area.
10. Attach crepe paper, streamers or plastic strips to your child's wrist then provide fast and slow music to stimulate movement.
11. Use pots and pans as musical instruments and have a parade.
12. Have your child play with balls and bounce them off different body parts.
13. Provide newspapers, tissue paper, or wrapping paper for your child to tear and crumble. Torn pieces of paper can be used to create colorful art designs.
14. Have your child practice stacking bowls, measuring cups and other containers by size.
15. Use a coffee can with a lid to have your child practice grasping and releasing. Cut small slits in the lid and have your child push through round, flat objects such as poker chips and washers. Try cutting shapes in the plastic lid and allowing your child to push through matching shaped objects.

Show your enthusiasm and share in your child's discoveries.

16. Provide plastic measuring cups, pitchers, tubing and other various size containers to use for fillign and pouring objects like sand, rice, popcorn and water. Also include different size spoons and ladles for scooping.

17. Let your child practice screwing and unscrewing lids on containers of various sizes and shapes.
18. Make a "feely box" from a shoe box by cutting a small hole in the lid. The hole should be large enough for your child to put his hand through. Fill the box with a variety of household objects. Have your child reach into the box, feel the objects, then guess or describe them.
19. Fill a box, large tire, or wading pool with styrofoam packing chips, rice, or dry beans. Hide various objects for children to find by feeling through the contents.
20. Fingerpaint with a variety of textures of different temperatures. Add sand or rice to the paint and chill it before using.
21. Let your child try fingerpainting on an old window shade, a paper plate, a piece of tile or a sheet of wallpaper.
22. Encourage your child to draw and color using large crayons and magic markers.

Encourage physical play and exercise.

23. Cut open the bottom of a plastic laundry basket and suspend it slightly above your child's reach. Have her use this for playing basketball with a soft ball.
24. Making a bowling game for your child from half-gallon milk cartons.

Encourage movement and exploration.

25. Use Playdough or molding clay to provide your child with experiences in squeezing, pounding, pinching and rolling. Use a rolling pin or short cylinder block to smooth out dough. Use cookie cutters and textured blocks to make designs and shapes.
26. Use child-size utensils for eating. Attach a handlebar grip if your child experiences difficulty holding a spoon or fork.
27. Put out old picture catalogs and magazines for your child to practice turning pages and looking at pictures. Old pictures can be replaced with new photographs of people and objects that are familiar to your child.
28. Supply your child with a toothbrush to practice brushing her teeth.
29. Water play is particularly interesting to toddlers. Fill a large basin or wading pool with water. Put in sponges, plastic containers, dolls or toy cars. Encourage your child to practice washing the items.
30. Play movement games like “Musical Chairs” and “Ring Around the Rosy.”

Suggested Activities for Preschoolers

Break down new skills into small, easy parts.

1. Make a fishing rod by attaching a small magnet to a string and attaching the string to a short rod. Have your child fish for items such as bottle caps stamped with numbers, colors, or letters. Attach a large paper clip to lightweight objects so that they can be fished out.
2. Make a paper plate a steering wheel. Have your child hold the plate and pretend to be driving a car. Your child can practice driving fast and driving slow.
3. Use a large inflated inner tube as a mini trampoline. Hold your child’s hand while he jumps up and down.
4. Use Styrofoam meat trays and plastic blunt needles or thin pegs to lace yarn in and out or to make different designs by sewing.
5. Strengthen control in your child’s hands, fingers, and wrists by having her dial the telephone or use a typewriter.
6. Play a game that encourages your child to move like different animals. For example, swim like a fish, fly like a bird and hop like a rabbit.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Developmental areas overlap. So a delay or impairment in development of large or fine motor skills may influence the rate and the means by which your child learns other developmental skills. Work with your child’s teachers and early care providers to plan for motor skill experiences, especially for the child who is not yet able to manipulate toys or objects independently or to move freely around your home.

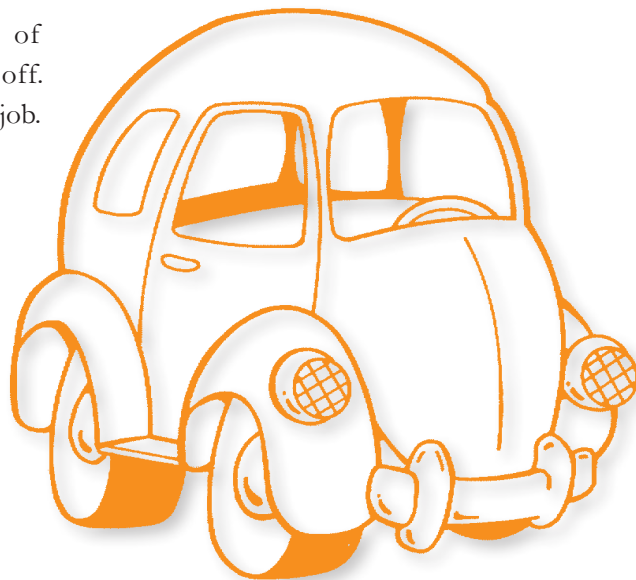
7. Use formboards and puzzles to improve your child's coordination and give him practice in recognizing relationships of size, position and direction.
8. Use a score board to manipulate around an obstacle course.
9. Hold on to one side of a hula hoop while your child holds on to the other side. Pull your child along in various directions. Have your child and his friends take turns pulling each other.

As your child learns new skills, participate and show encouragement.

10. Play "Hokey-Pokey," "Simon Says," "Red Light/Green Light," and other musical movement games to enhance your child's coordination and moving skills.
11. Have your child stuff envelopes with a variety of paper sizes.
12. Watch your child enjoy using Q-tips, sponges, cotton ball and small brushes to paint different size noodles. Let the noodles dry, then string them to make a necklace or bracelet.
13. Use squirt guns filled with paint or colored water to make designs on paper as well as to increase strength in finger control and grasping.
14. Secure your child's feet to the pedals of a tricycle to keep them from slipping off. Masking tape or strips of rags will do the job.
15. Have your child attach hair clips to the rim of a box or tin can and then try clipping clothes pins on an extended piece of rope.
16. Tie a string on a balloon and attach it to a pole. Using a long cardboard wrapping paper tube as a bat, your child can play basketball.
17. Have a tasting party and sample foods that have different flavors and textures such as salty, hot, sour, sweet, soft or crunchy.
18. Use paper knives or plastic knives to practice spreading icing or peanut butter on cupcakes or crackers.
19. Give your child an opportunity to practice cutting, pouring, and spreading during meal preparation.
20. Place an old wig or hairpiece on a styrofoam head to provide your child with opportunities to comb and brush hair.

Encourage self-help and independence.

21. Provide fun opportunities to play dress up.
22. Use clothing with velcro straps to speed up the dressing process and help your child become more independent.



Around the House: Sample Teaching Activities for Children with Disabilities

Sample Teaching Activity #1: MARIA LEARNS ALL DAY!

Description: Maria is a bright-eyed, happy and active 14 month old girl born with Down's Syndrome. Luckily, Maria's physician realized the importance of early intervention services and referred her to the Infants and Toddlers Program in her family's community. A teacher, speech-language pathologist and occupational therapist have all worked with Maria and her family since Maria was a young infant. Together they have developed fun, playful activities designed to help Maria strengthen her motor skills.

Activities:

At Meal Time—One special learning time within the daily routine is mealtime. While her parents prepare breakfast, Maria sits in her high chair and plays with plastic containers. she puts tops on them, places the smaller sized containers into the larger sized containers, and drops them to the floor watching them fall. Additionally, Maria feeds herself finger foods like raisins and dry round cereal.

At Bath Time—During Maria's bath, her parents give her sponges to squeeze and encourage her to feel the soapy water, pour water from a small cup into a larger one and pop bubbles with her pointing finger.

During Dressing—After bath time, while dressing in front of a mirror, Maria's parents have her sit on the floor and lift and wave her arms, wiggle her toes, and kick her legs.

At Play—Maria has not yet started walking independently, but she crawls and pulls herself up while holding onto household objects. Following the advise of a therapist, Maria's parents place her favorite musical toy just out of her reach and then encourage her to walk towards the toy. When Maria reaches the toy, her parents smile and hug her, and allow her time to sit with the toy and listen to the music.

Maria's parents also give lots of stimulation by bouncing her on the knees and gently roller her over. They slowly place her in different positions to encourage slight adjustments with her body. Finally, her parents play simple games which motivate Maria to move by rolling a ball toward her and pushing it back out to them.

During all of these times, Maria's parents smile, laugh and praise her efforts encouraging her to try again and practice what she has just learned.

Around the House: Sample Teaching Activities for Children with Disabilities

Sample Teaching Activity #2: BEN HELPS WITH CHORES

Description: Ben is an enthusiastic, sometimes mischievous, three-year-old, born with mild cerebral palsy. He has come a long way since the days when he needed corrective shoes and leg braces—thanks to the early physical therapy he received at his community preschool and follow-up activities that his parents worked on at home.

Though Ben has steadily progressed, his parents continue working at improving his somewhat awkward gait and general sense of balance. Continuous work on Ben's motor development also supports skill development also supports skill development in other areas like communication.

Activities:

Preparing the Meal—Mealtime is a favorite time for Ben and his parents to work on Ben's motor skills. Ben helps prepare meals by pouring, stirring and mixing various foods. He uses a special three-step platform that allows him to work at counter level. The platform also helps him work on walking up and down steps and practice using alternate feet while maintaining his balance.

Ben also builds his general vocabulary by learning to name different foods.

Doing the Laundry—Ben helps sort the weekly laundry, then he and his parents fold and stack clean clothing. His parents encourage him to talk about which pieces of clothing will be worn on which part of the body. Ben also carries small stacks of folded clothes to his room to be put away. During this activity, Ben works hard to keep his balance and walks carefully so that no items are dropped.

During Dressing—Outside, Ben and his parents work together in the garden. They dig holes and use garden tools to remove weeds. Ben likes to run from one end of the yard to the other while his parents look on encouragingly. Sometimes Ben plays games with his sister. And to work on developing a good pincer grasp. Ben's parents encourage him to pick small flowers from the garden.

With continued support and help from his family, Ben is steadily gaining ore skill and confidence in his ability to move around his world as an independent youngster.



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