

# Fine/ Gross Motor Skill Difficulties



## WHAT ARE MOTOR SKILL DIFFICULTIES?

- Motor skills are learned movement patterns. In normal development, these learned movement patterns combine to produce smooth, efficient action that allow a task to be completed (for example, kicking a ball or brushing your teeth).
- There are two types of motor skills:
  - **Fine motor skills** are actions requiring the use of small muscle groups to complete precise tasks. For example writing, doing up buttons, playing a flute are all tasks that require good fine motor skills.
  - **Gross motor skills** are actions requiring the use of large muscle groups to complete tasks. For example running, walking and jumping.
- Motor skills are produced in an area of the brain call the motor cortex. This is the area of the brain that controls voluntary muscle groups. There are many problems that can affect the motor cortex, the nervous system or the muscles themselves, which can make it more difficult to produce accurate and efficient movement for some children.

## WHAT STRATEGIES MIGHT HELP?

- **FINE MOTOR SKILLS**
- Provide wrist and finger strengthening exercises: threading, tracing, drawing, sorting, cutting, building, tearing paper, squeezing stress balls, hammering pegs, using clothes pegs/bull dog clips.
- Provide hand-to-eye coordination exercises: finger rhymes, touch screen, finger paint, dot-to-dot, mazes, building & stacking.
- Provide cutting exercises: excellent for all round strengthening and co-ordination. Provide spring loaded scissors if need be and thin card which is easier to cut than paper.
- Ensure child is seated correctly with feet on floor (provide footrest if necessary) and elbows resting comfortably on desk.
- Use a sloping board on which to write or place book to enable child to sit up straighter as well as achieve better pressure when writing.
- Encourage correct pencil grip and pincer grip: pegboards, short stubs of crayons which will not fit into the palm, triangular, chunky pencils.
- Highlight lines on page for writing and provide boxes for short sentences to encourage consistency of letter size.
- Ensure child is developmentally ready for writing (can they draw horizontal, vertical, diagonal lines and circles, all needed when forming letters independently?)
- **GROSS MOTOR SKILLS**
- Balancing along a low bench
- Obstacle courses that involve crawling under/ through, jumping over/ in, balancing and running
- Riding a tricycle or balance bike
- Play games such as 'Simon Says.. hop, skip, jump, walk backward etc.'
- Encourage child to move like a... tall giraffe, bouncy frog, galloping horse, slithery snake etc.
- Large drawing outside with chunky chinks, water & paintbrush etc. on the ground or fences
- Sweeping or raking leaves up.

### Things to consider:

Teach touch typing skills for children who have real difficulties with the physical process of writing

There are a number of interventions that can support the development of fine or gross motor skills:

- The Physical Literacy Programme (KS1)
- Write from the Start
- Speed-up Handwriting (KS2)

