

What are gross motor skills?

Gross motor skills are movements that we do with our legs and large body muscles. Gross motor skills:

- Are signs that your baby or toddler is developing skills involving the large muscles.
- Follow certain patterns and stages for most children.
- May happen at different times for each child.

What gross motor skills should my child have?

Some gross motor skills that are usual for babies and toddlers are listed in the chart below.

Child's age	Usual gross motor skills
Birth to 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turns head to both sides and gets head control • Raises head when on their stomach and then moves to holding chest up with weight on forearms (part of arm from the elbow to the hand) • Kicks both legs • Pulls to sit from shoulders, holding their head in line with the body
4 to 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pushes up on hands when on their stomach and begins to reach for toys with 1 hand or the other • Reaches and plays with feet when lying on their back • Rolls over (stomach to back and back to stomach) • Sits and supports their weight with their hands • Supports their weight on their feet when held upright at trunk (middle of body)
6 to 9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sits by themselves without supporting their weight with their hands • Gets in and out of sitting positions • Kneels or stands at play table when placed with support or close help • Pivots, or turns, around on their stomach
9 to 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crawls • Pulls up to standing • Lowers self to sit from standing at play table or couch • Cruises around furniture or walks with push toy
12 to 18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stands for a short time by themselves and then moves to standing by themselves • Begins taking steps without help • Squats and sits without crashing and without holding on
18 to 24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks on different kinds of surfaces • Picks objects off the floor like toys • Steps up when holding a railing or hand

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Gross motor skills, continued

Child's age	Usual gross motor skills
2 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jumps with both feet• Runs• Throws and kicks a ball• Walks up and down stairs with a railing
3 to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balances on 1 foot• Walks up stairs with alternating feet (1 foot and then the other)• Catches a ball• Pedals a tricycle• Climbs ladders and jungle gyms
Older than 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hops on 1 foot• Walks backwards on a line• Has balance that is getting better• Walks down stairs with alternating feet (1 foot and then the other)

Why causes a delay in gross motor skills?

A delay in gross motor skills can be caused by different things. One of the common causes is a delay in development. Doctors do not always know what causes this. Five main causes may include:

- Lack of tummy time play.
- Lack of practice of new motor skills.
- Prematurity (born early).
- Genetic conditions (passed from parent to child through the genes).
- Exposure to drugs or toxins.

Where can I get help?

If you think your child has big delays in gross motor skills:

- Call your child's doctor right away. Your child may need some tests to find the cause. The sooner your child gets help, the sooner something can be done to help with the problem and prevent more delays.
- If you have other questions or concerns about your child's gross motor skills, talk with the doctor. You may also call the Rehabilitation department at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at this phone number:

_____.

Therapist: _____ Date: _____

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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