



PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

The emphasis in this domain is on physical health and motor development as an integral part of children's overall well-being. The healthy development of young children is directly related to practicing healthy behaviors, strengthening large and small muscles, and developing strength and coordination. As their gross and fine motor skills develop, children experience new opportunities to explore and investigate the world around them. Conversely, physical health problems can impede a child's development and are associated with poor child outcomes. As such, physical development is critical for development and learning in all other domains. The components within this domain address health and safety practices, gross motor development, and fine motor development.

Children with physical disabilities may demonstrate alternate ways of meeting gross and fine motor goals; for example, by pedaling an adaptive tricycle, navigating a wheelchair, or feeding themselves with a specialized spoon. Children with cognitive disabilities also meet these same goals in a different way, often at a different pace, with a different degree of accomplishment, and in a different order than typically developing children. When observing how children demonstrate what they know and can do, teachers must consider appropriate adaptations and modifications, as necessary. Principles of universal design for learning (UDL) offer the least restrictive and most inclusive approach to developing environments and curricula that best support the physical health and motor development of all children.

Remember: While this domain represents general expectations for physical health and motor development, each child will reach the individual learning goals at his or her own pace and in his or her own way.

- PH 1: Health and Safety Practices
- PH 2: Gross Motor Development
- PH 3: Fine Motor Development





PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Component 1: Health and Safety Practices
Learning Goal 1.a: Children engage in structured and unstructured physical activity.

By the following ages, most children will:

9m



- > Sustain physical activity for at least three to five minutes at a time
- > Participate in simple movement games with an adult (e.g., following a moving object or person with their eyes or body)

18m



- > Participate in active physical play with an adult
- > Watch and often run when they see older children running
- > Attempt to try new games and toys
- > Stand with feet wide apart and sway to the sound of music

24m



- > Wield larger toys with some accuracy (e.g., pounding on a pegboard and pegs or on a pounding board)
- > Back into a chair to sit down
- > Squat while playing
- > Carry a large toy while walking or playing
- > Run after older children who are running

36m



- > Sustain physical activity for at least 15 minutes at a time for at least 30 minutes total each day
- > Participate in outdoor play
- > Try new games and toys without assistance
- > Actively participate in games and dances

48m



- > Carry bags or objects over short distances
- > Practice kicking, throwing, and running

60m



- > Increase their amount of play and activity, using more muscles and for longer periods of time (i.e., at least 60 minutes total each day)



All children have built-in capacities to attain developmental goals in multiple ways and under varying conditions.

- Neurons to Neighborhoods





PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Component 1: Health and Safety Practices

Learning Goal 1.b: Children become increasingly able to identify unsafe situations and gradually learn strategies for responding to them.

By the following ages, most children will:

9m



- › Express discomfort or anxiety in stressful situations
- › Demonstrates a recognition of the difference between their primary caregiver and a stranger

18m



- › Sometime respond appropriately to redirection given by an adult caregiver

24m



- › Respond appropriately to redirection by adults unless too caught up in a game or emotion
- › Demonstrate a beginning understanding when adults say “stop” or “danger” by stopping or listening to adults
- › Hold hands briefly with adults when walking but often break contact when distracted by another person or object

36m



- › Recognize or identify some harmful or unsafe objects and situations
- › Stop a behavior in response to direction by an adult
- › Understand and participate in the routine of holding hands with an adult when walking in public places
- › Seek an adult’s help in some unsafe or dangerous situations

48m



- › Recognize unsafe situations and tell an adult; alert adult when another child is in a dangerous situation
- › Understand the difference between “safe touch” and “unsafe touch,” especially if previously instructed
- › Tell what the consequences are of unsafe behaviors
- › With adult assistance, look both ways before crossing the street

60m



- › Follow safety rules with adult assistance
- › Recognize symbols or signs for danger (e.g., poison labels) and avoid those objects or areas
- › Follow emergency routines after adult instruction
- › Understand the consequences of not following rules related to safety



Play is the answer to the question, how does anything new ever come about?

- Jean Piaget





PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Component 1: Health and Safety Practices
Learning Goal 1.c: Children develop self-help skills.

By the following ages, most children will:

9m



- > Fuss or cry when hungry and quiet down when picked up to be fed in a timely manner
- > Coordinate sucking and swallowing
- > Assist with self-feeding by holding a bottle or breast; turn their head away when full
- > Explore food with their hands and fingers (e.g., crackers and other easy-to-handle foods)
- > Accept most basic care routines administered by adults (e.g., gum cleansing or nose wiping)
- > Relax during bathing routines
- > Babble or coo after diapering
- > Indicate their needs and wants (e.g., wanting food or a dirty diaper to be changed)

18m



- > Point to food when wanting more
- > Feed themselves finger foods
- > Drink from a cup with some spilling
- > Drink from a straw
- > Use a spoon with some spilling
- > Accept more involved care routines administered by adults (e.g., tooth brushing)
- > Participate in hand-washing with assistance
- > Participate in dressing or attempt to dress themselves
- > Remove some clothing
- > Use gestures, body language, or vocalizations to seek out help from an adult

24m



- > Feed themselves with spoon and fork (with some spilling) if early self-help skills are valued and taught in their family culture
- > Drink from a cup (with some spilling) if early self-help skills are valued and taught in their family culture
- > Participate in some self tooth brushing while an adult is helping them brush their teeth
- > Indicate choices in clothes and shoes by gesturing or using simple words
- > Have limited control over bowels and bladder
- > Use a tissue when offered by an adult to wipe nose, face, or hands

36m



- > Understand the difference between food and non-food items
- > Recognize when foods are new to them and choose whether to taste or not
- > Cooperate and assist with tooth brushing
- > Wash hands with assistance
- > Dress or undress with minimal assistance
- > Sit on a toilet
- > Obtain and use tissues to wipe their nose, face, or hands
- > Indicate when not feeling well

48m



- > Help with mealtime routines, such as setting a table
- > Brush their teeth with assistance from an adult
- > Wash and dry hands with verbal prompts and support
- > Attempt dressing and undressing
- > Put their shoes on but may need assistance with tying them
- > Choose their own clothes to wear
- > Use a toilet
- > Cover their mouth when coughing

60m



- > Help in preparing snacks and meals
- > Demonstrate independence in personal self-care skills (e.g., washing hands, brushing teeth)
- > Dress or undress
- > Manage zippers, buttons, buckles, and Velcro
- > Tell an adult caregiver when tired



PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Component 2: Gross Motor Development

Learning Goal 2.a: Children develop large muscle control, strength, and coordination.

By the following ages, most children will:

9m



- > Reach and play with toys while sitting
- > Reach for objects and bring them to their mouth
- > Pound on a table and other objects
- > Roll both ways (front to back and back to front)
- > Get into sitting position without help while lying down or crawling
- > Sit without support
- > Pull up to a standing position

18m



- > Squat to pick up toys or other objects
- > Jump with feet apart
- > Carry a toy while walking
- > Stand on one foot with assistance

24m



- > Bend or stoop over to pick up a toy or other object
- > Pull toys behind themselves
- > Climb onto and off of couches, chairs, large rocks, or logs
- > Roll a large ball
- > Toss a ball into a large container
- > Sit on and move small-wheeled riding toys

36m



- > Play "catch" using a large rubber ball
- > Throw underhand with some direction
- > Climb on outdoor play equipment

48m



- > Pedal a tricycle
- > Aim and throw a ball overhand toward a target
- > Bounce a ball
- > Hit a stationary ball with a plastic or foam bat
- > Use arms and legs in a coordinated manner to "pump" on a swing
- > Jump off a bottom step with two feet
- > Jump with two feet over small objects

60m



- > Catch a small ball with two hands
- > Bounce a ball and catch it
- > Aim and throw a ball with some accuracy



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Component 2: Gross Motor Development
Learning Goal 2.b: Children develop traveling skills.

By the following ages, most children will:

9m



- > Shift between lying down, sitting, and balancing on their hands and knees
- > Crawl

18m



- > Move from one place to another by walking
- > Sometimes run instead of walk
- > Walk upstairs holding an adult's hand or crawl upstairs on hands and knees

24m



- > Run sturdily
- > Walk up steps with some help
- > Walk backwards
- > Walk on tiptoes

36m



- > Change direction while walking or running
- > Stop suddenly after running (displaying increased coordination and regulation of large muscles)
- > Climb upstairs using alternating feet; walk downstairs, placing both feet on one step before approaching each subsequent step down
- > Jump forward at least six inches
- > Move in, under, and over objects in the environment with ease

48m



- > Run up to a ball and kick it while maintaining balance
- > Walk or run around obstacles and corners
- > Walk up and down stairs, alternating feet
- > Understand the position or orientation of their body to other objects and people

60m



- > Hop forward on one foot without losing balance
- > Walk along a beam or edge
- > Gallop
- > Skip
- > Run with control and balance, making quick turns without losing speed and quick stops
- > Demonstrate how their body can move forward, backward, left and right
- > Demonstrate how their body can move fast or slow



You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You're on your own, and you know what you know. And you're the guy [girl] who'll decide where to go.

- Dr. Suess





PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Component 3: Fine Motor development

Learning Goal 3.a: Children develop small muscle control, strength, and coordination.

By the following ages, most children will:

9m



- › Hold onto a toy when it is handed to them
- › Reach for, grasp, and shake things
- › Bring hands and objects to their mouth
- › Transfer a toy from one hand to another
- › Pat, shake, or hit objects
- › Mimic a hand clap or wave

18m



- › Turn the pages of books and point to pictures while being read to
- › Hold objects in both hands
- › Pick up very small objects with their index finger and thumb
- › Bang two toys together
- › Play pat-a-cake without much help (such as someone moving their hands for them)
- › Begin to stack two to three blocks

24m



- › Open cabinets, drawers, and boxes
- › String large beads
- › Turn containers over to empty out the contents
- › Remove lids from containers
- › Stack four to six large blocks/cubes
- › Attempt snipping with scissors

36m



- › String large beads onto shoe laces
- › Turn knobs and unscrew lids, put lids on post, unwrap candy, etc.
- › Put three or four pieces into a puzzle board
- › Dig and scoop sand or water
- › Use scissors

48m



- › String small beads onto shoe laces
- › Continues to fit together manipulatives and connecting toys (e.g., Legos, bristle blocks)
- › Use scissors with purpose

60m



- › Fold a piece of paper with accuracy and symmetry
- › Work a puzzles of up to 10 pieces
- › Use simple tools (e.g., stapler, hole punch, scissors, tape dispenser)
- › Hold paper and begin to cut with scissors along a straight line



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Component 3: Fine Motor development
Learning Goal 3.b: Children develop writing and drawing skills.

By the following ages, most children will:

9m



- > Grasp objects with their thumb, index, and middle fingers (i.e., using pincer grip)
- > Bring their hands to their midline (i.e., moving hands towards each other over the middle of their body)

18m



- > Grab and hold large writing objects, such as crayons, with their whole grip
- > Scribble spontaneously on paper

24m



- > Hold large writing objects, such as crayons, in an approximate thumb-and-finger grip
- > Make spontaneous dots, lines, and wobbly circles when painting or drawing
- > Fold paper approximately in half

36m



- > Hold a pencil in an approximate thumb-and-finger grip
- > Attempt to copy a drawn circle
- > Attempt to imitate a drawn cross
- > Attempt to imitate a horizontal and vertical stroke

48m



- > Hold a regular pencil using an adult grip
- > Imitate a horizontal and vertical stroke
- > Imitate a drawn cross
- > Imitate a drawn circle
- > Write letter or numeral-like forms

60m



- > Draw recognizable shapes
- > Write some letters and numerals



Infants and young children are not just sitting twiddling their thumbs, waiting for their parents to teach them to read and do math. They are expending a vast amount of time and effort in exploring and understanding their immediate world. Healthy education supports and encourages this spontaneous learning.

- David Elkind

