

Gross Motor

These activities include children using their bodies and large muscles to move, change position, and develop coordination and balance.



Heads up

This activity is designed for children 1-4 months of age

What you need:

- A sofa or bed
- A bright colored toy

What you do:

- Place your baby on their stomach on the sofa or bed and help your child rest on his/her elbows.
- Get on your stomach or sit on the sofa or bed and face your baby so that your eyes are at the same level as your baby's.
- Dangle a bright colored toy in front of your baby's face.
- Make sounds, talk and sing to get your baby to lift their head and look at you.



Please be sure that you do not leave your baby alone on the couch or bed. If you need to walk away, please be sure to take your baby with you.

How it helps:

- Helps your baby strengthen the muscles in their stomach and neck so that they can learn how to hold their head up.

Extension to activity:

- Once your baby shows head/neck control, encourage your baby to lift their chest using their arms as support by dangling a toy at a higher level. Slowly move the toy from side to side to encourage your baby to follow the object with their eyes.

Gross motor

0-12 months

Roly poly baby

This activity is designed for children 4-8 months of age

What you need:

- A blanket
- Your child's favorite toy

What you do:

- Place your baby on their back on the blanket on a carpeted floor
- Lie next to your child, make eye contact, talk and laugh to help your child roll toward you.
- Use your child's favorite toy to encourage your child to roll.



How it helps:

- Helps your child strengthen muscles in the arms, legs and tummy.
- Helps your baby learn how to roll.

Extension to activity:

- Once your baby has mastered rolling over, encourage your baby to scoot on their tummy by moving a toy just out of their reach.

Over you go!

This activity is designed for children 8-12 months of age

What you need:

- A firm pillow
- Interesting toys

What you do:

- Place a pillow on the floor
- Encourage your child to crawl up and over the pillow to get to the toys



How it helps:

- Helps strengthen the muscles of the hips and legs when crawling uphill and strengthen the muscles of the arms and shoulders when crawling downhill.
- Helps to develop balance.

Extension to activity:

- As your child gets stronger, use larger pillows, such as couch cushions.

Gross motor

12-24 months

Rolling a ball

This activity is designed for children 12-16 months of age

What you need:

- A soft or plastic ball

What you do:

- Place your baby on the floor.
- Sit in front of your baby and roll a ball to her.
- Encourage your baby to roll the ball back to you.
- Clap your hands when she rolls the ball to you.



How it helps:

- Helps your baby learn how to roll a ball back and forth to you.
- Also encourages a social interaction game.

Chase game

This activity is designed for children 16-20 months of age

What you need:

- Your toddler
- Backyard or a park

What you do:

- Because your toddler is starting to run now, take them in the backyard or to a park.
- Most toddlers love to be chased so chase your toddler outside. They will love it when you catch them and hug them.
- Most toddlers love to do this over and over so have fun.



How it helps:

- This activity gives you and your toddler exercise.
- This activity is good for your toddler to practice using their muscles in their legs and feet while playing a fun, social game with you.

Gross motor

12-24 months

Lily pad leap

This activity is designed for children 20-24 months of age

What you need:

- Carpet squares or the squares on a tile floor

What you do:

- Place the carpet squares together in a row on the floor.
- Encourage your child to jump from square to square.
- Place the carpet squares farther apart as your child learns to jump. If you are using the squares on your tile floor, put a piece of tape on the squares you want your child to jump to next. You can make them farther apart as your child's balance gets better.



How it helps:

- Helps your child learn how to balance while jumping.
- Helps your child learn how to make bigger jumps with more practice and will strengthen their leg muscles.

Bottle bowling

This activity is designed for children 24-30 months of age

What you need:

- Medium-size ball
- Several plastic empty bottles

What you do:

- Set up the plastic bottles close together in a row.
- Show your child how to roll the ball to knock down the bottles.
- Have your child stand close to the row of bottles at first and move farther away as they get better at hitting the bottles.
- You can also practice tossing the ball toward the bottles.



How it helps:

- Your child will practice coordination with learning how to roll and throw the ball.
- Your child will be using different large muscles in their body to throw and roll the ball.

Extension to activity:

- Add more bottles to knock down, or have child stand farther away from the bottles, when rolling the ball.

Gross motor

24-36 months

Pop those bubbles

This activity is designed for children 30-36 months of age

What you need:

- Bubbles

What you do:

- Take your child outside on a nice day.
- Blow bubbles and show your child how to pop them by clapping your hands on the bubbles.
- Let your child chase the bubbles, jump on them, clap and pop them.
- Play this game for as long as your child is having fun.



How it helps:

- Your child will practice their coordination skills with this activity when trying to clap the bubbles while they are moving.
- Your child will strengthen muscles in their hands and arms when popping the bubbles.

Extension to activity:

- Encourage your child to pop the bubbles using just a finger or suggest another body part, like elbow, foot, or head to pop the bubbles.

Balloon soccer

This activity is designed for children 30-36 months of age

What you need:

- A balloon or ball
- A medium-sized box

What you do:

- Lay the box on its side to be the goal.
- Show your child how to kick the balloon or ball around the room and into the box.
- Have your child kick the balloon or ball to the box to score a goal.



Note: Be careful if using a balloon. It can be a choking hazard or can frighten a child if it pops.

How it helps:

- Your child will practice their balance and coordination skills as they follow the ball or balloon.
- Your child will strengthen their muscles in their feet and legs as they kick the balloon or ball.

Extension to activity:

- Use a small box as the goal or use a ball instead of a balloon.

Gross motor

36-48 months

March, march, march

This activity is designed for children 36-42 months of age

What you need:

- A drum or a flag (optional)

What you do:

- Tell your child that you are going to have a parade.
- Show your child how to march while you pick up your legs and feet.
- March around the house with your child; use a drum or flag for your parade.



How it helps:

- Your child will strengthen their legs muscles when they march around.

Extension to activity:

- When indoors, make a mountain of pillows to march up and over, or create an obstacle course to go through as you march.

Freeze and melt

This activity is designed for children 36-42 months of age

What you need:

- Music
- Music player

What you do:

- Move around the room doing different moves.
- Tell your child that when the music plays, you can move around but when the music stops, they have to freeze in the move that they were doing.
- Say “freeze” when the music stops.
- Say “melt” when it’s time to start moving around again.



How it helps:

- Develops large muscles as your child moves around the room.
- Helps your child hold different movements in a pose, which teaches your child how to balance their body.

Extension to activity:

- Do different movements that include flying like an airplane, standing on one foot, jumping and marching.

Gross motor

36-48 months

Follow the leader

This activity is designed for children 36-42 months of age

What you need:

- A playground or an area that allows you to move around objects

What you do:

- When playing at the park or playground, tell your child to follow you.
- Have your child follow you around with running, hopping, jumping, and sliding down slides like they are on an obstacle course.
- Take turns being the leader with your child.



How it helps:

- Your child will strengthen different muscles in their body when they run, hop, and jump around.
- Helps to teach your child coordination of their body movements.

Extension to activity:

- Try having your children repeat multiple tasks in order, for example, hop over a log, crawl around the tree, then skip to the table.

Tap the balloon

This activity is designed for children 48-54 months of age

What you need:

- A balloon

What you do:

- Show your child how to tap the balloon to keep it in the air without touching the ground.
- Have your child try to tap the balloon to keep it from touching the ground.
- When it touches the ground, tap the balloon back up in the air to start the game again.



How it helps:

- Helps your child learn how to tap the balloon gently.
- Helps your child's coordination as they keep it in the air.

Extension to activity:

- Encourage children to use different body parts to tap the balloon – fingers, elbows, knees, backs, etc.

Gross motor

48-60 months

Leaf fun

This activity is designed for children 54-60 months of age

What you need:

- Fall leaves
- Rakes

What you do:

- Rake the leaves into different piles.
- Have your child jump in the piles and over the piles of leaves.



How it helps:

- Helps build the strength in your child's leg muscles with jumping in and over the piles of leaves.

Extension to activity:

- Rake the leaves into piles at the bottom of a slide or step and then your child can now jump over the pile.

Animals all over

This activity is designed for children 54-60 months of age

What you need:

- Pictures of animals

What you do:

- Turn the pictures of animals face down
- Take turns with your child choosing a picture
- Act out the animal you picked together (for example: you will jump, jump, jump for a kangaroo or run fast for a cheetah).



How it helps:

- Helps your child use their large muscles in their body when they are acting like different animals.

Extension to activity:

- Try to guess what animal your child is pretending to be.