HELP ME GROW LEARNING CIRCLE

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT (GROSS AND FINE MOTOR)

WHAT IS PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Physical development is your child learning how to grow, move, and control their body. It is a journey that starts from birth, where your child gains the strength and coordination needed to explore their world and become more independent.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

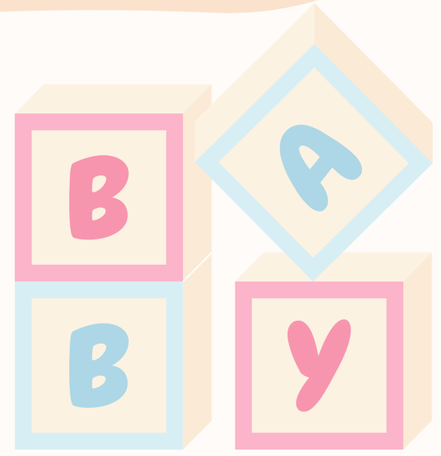
It's generally divided into two main areas:

- **Big Body Movements (Gross Motor Skills)**
  - These involve the large muscle groups in the arms, legs, and torso. They are the "power" movements that help your child get from one place to another.
    - Examples: Rolling over, crawling, walking, running, jumping, and climbing stairs.
- **Small Hand Movements (Fine Motor Skills)**
  - These involve the small muscles in the hands, fingers, and wrists. They are the "precision" movements that require focus and hand-eye coordination.
    - Examples: Grasping a rattle, picking up a piece of cereal, using a spoon, drawing with a crayon, or buttoning a shirt.

WHY IT MATTERS

Physical growth is connected to everything your child does:

- **Brain Power:** As children move and explore, they build new connections in their brain that help with thinking and problem-solving.
- **Confidence:** Every time a child masters a new skill—like taking their first steps or stacking a tower of blocks—they feel a sense of "I did it!", which builds their self-esteem.
- **Social Skills:** Physical play, like rolling a ball back and forth or playing "Tag," teaches children how to take turns and cooperate with friends.



WAYS TO SUPPORT PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Tummy Time:** For infants, this is the "gym" where they build the neck and shoulder strength needed for sitting and crawling.
- **Active Play:** Encourage daily movement, like family dance parties or trips to the park. It is recommended that toddlers and preschoolers get at least 3 hours of active play spread throughout the day.
- **Hands-on Fun:** Provide toys like blocks, Play-Doh, and crayons to let your child practice using those small hand muscles.

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ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Birth to 12 Months: “The Grower”

- **Tummy Time:** Aim for at least 30 minutes daily, spread across short 2–5 minute sessions when the baby is awake. Use bright toys or mirrors to encourage head-turning and arm-pushing.
- **Reaching & Grabbing:** Dangle soft, noisy toys just within reach to build hand-eye coordination.
- **Floor Play:** Encourage rolling, kicking, and eventually crawling by placing favorite toys just out of reach.

ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

12–24 Months: "The Explorer"

- **Push-and-Pull Toys:** Use wagons, toy mowers, or block carts to build leg strength and balance.
- **Imitative Movement:** Play "Animal Walks" (e.g., hopping like a frog, slithering like a snake) to practice coordination.
- **Fine Motor Fun:** Practice peeling stickers, stacking large blocks, or using thick-handled spoons to build finger dexterity.

ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

3- 4 Years: "The Big Kid"

- **Structured Games:** Introduce games with simple rules like "Red Light, Green Light" or "Follow the Leader" to practice stopping, starting, and following directions.
- **Obstacle Courses:** Use couch cushions, hula hoops, and tunnels to encourage jumping, crawling, and balancing.
- **Coordination Tools:** Provide tricycles, balance beams (or tape lines on the floor), and soft balls for kicking and throwing.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

The Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) is considered a "gold standard" tool because it relies on the person who knows the child best: you. It typically takes only 10–15 minutes to complete. It lists specific things your child can do, helping you recognize and celebrate their progress. See where your child is at developmentally by scanning the QR codes

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