



What is gross motor play (GMP)?

- GMP is active physical play in which children use their large muscles.
- Dancing, walking, running, jumping, pedaling, climbing, throwing and catching balls, and tossing beanbags are examples of GMP.
- GMP can take place inside and outside; it can be educator-led or child-led.
- It can take place in big and small groups or individually.
- It can take place with or without equipment and materials.
- Even young children who aren't crawling or walking need time on blankets or mats to move freely to develop their muscles.

Why is gross motor play important?

- Regular, fun, active physical play promotes healthy lifestyles and reduces stress.
- Active physical play:
 - * Promotes muscle development, coordination and control.
 - * Supports emotional and social development as children engage with peers and practice these skills.
 - * Promotes motivation and achievement.
 - * Teaches problem-solving skills.
 - * Encourages cooperation and sharing.

How can you promote active play?

- Make it fun! When children have fun, they play and move more.
- Give infants and toddlers space, both inside and outside, and time to move throughout the day. Encourage movement with balls, riding toys, tunnels, mats, and play gyms.
- Give preschool children and school-agers time and space, indoors and outdoors, to move and play throughout the day.
- Take children outdoors every day. When they can't play outside, promote indoor play with dancing, jumping, rolling or kicking balls and active games.
- Set up bean bag tosses, use streamers and music for dancing, or roll out a hop scotch rug to allow children more opportunities for being active in a creative way.
- Set up obstacle courses or musical chairs to give the staff and children time to talk together and practice social skills, problem solving and working together.

For more information about gross motor play, please use resources found on the tnstarquality.org website and contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral Center.

The following videos produced by **EarlyChildhoodVideos** can be found on YouTube:

- Encouraging Physical Activity in Preschoolers
- Incorporating Motor Play into the Classroom
- Nurturing Preschool Children's Emotional Health Through Active Play

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