

# Improve Motor Skills, Accelerate Progress!

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## Why Are Motor Skills So Important?

### Brain Research and Learning

“ Learning, thought, creativity and intelligence are not processes of the brain alone, but of the whole body.”- *Dr. Carla Hannaford, Smart Moves*

“Children experiencing lapses in motor skills may have problems with cursive writing, playing musical instruments, guiding scissors or holding a pencil. These lapses may distract the brain from interpreting new information.”-*Dr. Mel Levine*

**Learning and Memory are best when the following are incorporated with \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**

### Important concepts:

#### Sensory Input

“Our whole body is designed as a fine tuned sensory receptor for collecting information.” *Dr. Carla Hannaford, Smart Moves*

Eyes      Ears  
Nose      Skin  
Movement

The Sensory Systems help us organize, store, and retrieve information from our world.

The 3-7 year old brain is the most receptive to sensations and most able to organize them.

#### Crossing Midline (pp. 1-1,1-7,5-3)

The vertical center of one’s body  
Helps integrate right and left brain  
Helps coordinate two handed activities

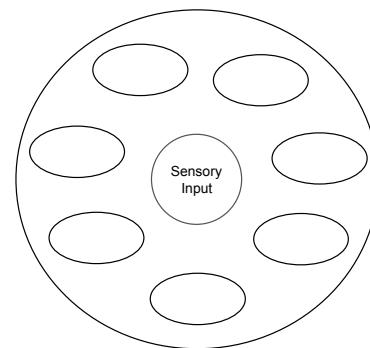
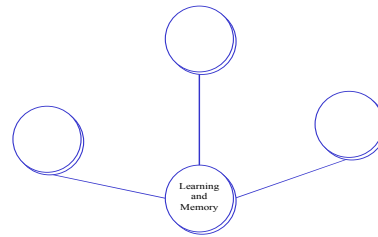
#### Proprioception (Appendix)

Knowledge of body position in space  
Can hold body position without looking at it.

#### Kinesthesia (Appendix)

Ability to perceive and regulate body movement  
Ability to imitate movement

## NOTES



**Poor Proprioception indicators:**

Using too much or too little pressure  
Misinterpret personal space  
Low muscle tone  
Poor balance  
“Sensory seeking” behaviors

**Proprioception Interventions:**

Bean Bag Chair  
Bag of Rice or Beans  
Wear tight or heavy clothing  
Carry heavy things  
Incorporate movement with instruction  
Dancing

**Visual-Motor Coordination**

The capability of coordinating vision and movements of the body.

**Visual-Motor Integration Problems**

The child may know what must be done but cannot formulate the motor plan to make it happen.

**Visual Motor or Visual Perception Difficulty Indicators:**

- Difficulty with written assignments
- Sloppy writing
- Poor organization
- Poor pencil grip
- Erases excessively
- Trouble aligning math problems
- Poor spacing
- Difficulty reading
- Difficulty with maps
- Trouble with reversals
- Confuse left and right
- Confuse letters with similar form
- Confuses words with similar appearance

**HANDWRITING**

**Pencil Grasp (pp. 1-2, 1-3, 1-10)**

**Efficient- “Open Web Space”**-a rounded space between one’s thumb and index finger.

**Inefficient-collapsed “web space”**

**Pencil Grips**

**Adapted Clothespin Activities**-Attach letters, numbers or words to the clothespins and have the students clip them up in order.

**Strength (pp. 1-7, 5-3)**

**“Writing on the Vertical”**- increases blood flow and oxygen to the brain, as well as neural activity, attention and processing speed.

**Chair Warm-ups**-5 arm presses against the table; 5 Chair "sit-ups"; Stomp feet on the floor; Shift weight from side to side; Tap muscles to "wake them up! (Chair Warm Ups are the copyright of EduCLIME, LLC.)

**Visual Processing (pp. 2-4, 2-5)**

**Directionality**-Arrow Practice

- Learned by the relationship to one’s body
- Understanding the meaning of the concepts
- Ability to transfer information to paper and pencil tasks

**Spacing**-dot, dash or finger turned sideways

**Letter Placement** - Sky/Grass/Earth writing; Living Letters® Handwriting Program

**Posture (p. 5-1)**

**Seated Body Position**– 90 degree angle at the knees, feet ON THE FLOOR and table height 2 inches above the bent elbow.

**Phone Book Footrests**

**Sensation (p. 4-3)**

**“Magnetic Tracing”**

**Clay Plates**-Have students write in clay to strengthen their hands and send a stronger sensory message to the brain!

**Coloring Strategies (p.1-4)**

Wikki Stix®- Use to outline items to be colored, thus giving the student a tactile cue.

### **Cutting Strategies (p.1-6)**

Proper scissor position: Place the thumb and middle fingers in the holes, using the index finger underneath to support and "guide" the scissors.

For students who don't know what to do with the fourth and fifth fingers, give them a cosmetic sponge to hold with those fingers.

Tell the students to cut with their THUMB UP!

Use "sandwich cutters" to give students tactile cues. Sandwich Cutters may also be used as paper holders.

### **Throwing and Catching (p. 5-11)**

- Requires bilateral coordination
- Use a variety of mediums
- Change positions: seated, kneeling, half-kneeling, standing

### **Rope Walking (p. 5-5)**

Ski Jump- memorization of letters, counting, color recognition, reading

Scissor Walk- memorization of letters, counting, color recognition, reading

### **Incorporating Motor Activities into Learning Strengthens:**

- Sensory systems, information and processing
- Physical understanding
- Learning and Memory
- Alertness
- Joy in Greater Success!

### **Question and Answer**