



DEVELOPING MOTOR PLANNING SKILLS

Motor planning is how a child plans, coordinates, and performs bodily movements to complete a task. Motor planning is part of tasks of all difficulty levels from reaching for a rattle to riding a bike. QAA

WHY DOES MY CHILD TAKE SO LONG TO COMPLETE TASKS?

This is because your child needs to think through exactly what steps are required, and in what order to complete a specific task. For example, a motor plan for putting on pants would include knowing that this occurs after underwear is already on, what direction the pants should be, what leg to put through first, and so on.

SIGNS OF MOTOR PLANNING DIFFICULTIES:

- Difficulty imitating simple movements (clapping hands, giving high 5s, jumping, etc.)
- Accidentally dropping items
- Often tripping over their own feet when walking
- Needing excessive amounts of time to complete basic tasks like taking a bite of food or coming their hair

SCHOOL RELATED MOTOR PLANNING TASKS:

- Walking through the classroom or hallway
- Playing in gym class or during recess
- Raising their hand
- Washing their hands
- Writing
- Putting on or taking off their coat/backpack
- Carrying items
- Any other activity that involves movement

HOW YOU HELP YOUR CHILD WITH MOTOR PLANNING SKILLS:

A key way to assist children with motor planning is to give them the opportunity to try things without any help. This allows them to see what their bodies can do. Below are more examples of how to assist children with motor planning difficulties:

- Show them how to do it first.
- Pause: give them time to think about how to do the task.
- Let them try, even if that means failing. This step is crucial as it encourages learning through trial and error. By allowing them to fail, they are naturally learning what methods will not work. Each time they can try again in a slightly different way until they are able to successfully do what they have been trying to complete.
- Assist them once they have tried at least twice by themselves.
- Break the task down into smaller pieces. For example, when using a spoon to eat applesauce, instead of handing them the spoon and walking away, they may need you to scoop the applesauce, and then put the spoon in their hand, so they can practice bringing the spoon to their mouth to eat.
- Have the child continue practicing the skill every day until they become independent in completing it.

OTHER RESOURCES

- <https://childdevelopment.com.au/areas-of-concern/organisation/planning-and-sequencing-praxis/>
- <https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/movement-coordination-issues/motor-planning-what-you-need-to-know>
- <https://therapyfunzone.net/blog/motor-planning-made-easy>