

**Kay Rowe Nursery School**  
**Physical Development Policy**  
Reviewed October 2010



**Why is Physical Development An Important Part of The Nursery Curriculum?**

Physical development is concerned with developing manipulative and motor skills, physical control, co-ordination, mobility and an awareness of space. It also involves knowledge of how the body works and establishes positive attitudes towards a healthy and active way of life. These are skills that are essential foundations to children's future development.

Young children learn by being active and can access a range of learning opportunities while engaged in physical activity.

Physical Development underpins many other skills such as being able to write and draw effectively, to have confidence, balance and a positive sense of self.

**Aims**

Our aims for a physical development policy are to :-

Encourage children to move confidently and imaginatively with increased control and co-ordination – enjoyment

Encourage independence & confidence to tackle challenging activities

Encourage children to be aware of space i.e. their own and others

Enable children to use a range of small and large equipment, including balancing and climbing apparatus, with increased skill

Enable children to handle appropriate tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increased control

Develop a positive attitude to the benefits of a healthy active life and a sense of well being

**Equal Opportunities**

Staff are committed to enabling all children to access the physical curriculum regardless of gender, race or disability. Every effort is made to differentiate activities in such a way that children can participate at a level appropriate to their developing skills.

Staff are aware that girls can be more reluctant to join construction activities than boys and that boys often tend to dominate tricycles and other wheeled toys. They will ensure that children are directed to activities with an appropriate focus from time to time, to develop the range of necessary skills and ensure that no group or gender dominates the use of equipment.

**Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

Children with SEN are assessed regularly and, in consultation with parents, specific learning objectives are set. We encourage all children regardless of ability to gain confidence in developing physical skills in a context meaningful to them and provide necessary equipment

e.g. scissors \ pencil grips, to enable them to do so.  
Further details are available in the school's inclusion Policy.

### **Bilingual Learners**

Staff will take every opportunity to introduce appropriate vocabulary and extend the language of bilingual learners. Much important vocabulary can be introduced during activities designed to foster physical development e.g. up, down, over, across, in, out, higher, lower, jump, run etc. Using words within this context helps bilingual learners in their language acquisition.

### **Encouraging the Development of Physical Skills**

Children experience a wide range of opportunities to develop physical skills while at Nursery. These will include:-

Free play

Group or whole class activities

Use of indoor and outdoor environment and equipment

Dance and expressive movement sessions

Many of these opportunities arise as part of the everyday nursery curriculum. Staff also include focused activities in their planning with specific teaching and learning objectives. Examples of activities which might be planned with a specific focus are contained in the Appendix to this policy. In considering specific objectives, staff have chosen two headings:  
1.Gross Motor Skills and 2.Fine Motor Skills

### **Gross Motor Skills**

Objectives in developing gross motor skills are to enable children to:

Extend their physical world and meet new situations i.e. sloped surfaces to slide down, climbing frames to go up, holes to crawl through, moving objects to climb on.

Move safely in different ways:-

travel eg. run, skip jump leap, hop turn spin, roll, whirl

gesture throw, catch, reach, stretch, bend, flick

balance (or almost still) shiver, hover, balances on one leg, stand on one leg

Develop spatial awareness by using wheeled toys such as tricycles and wheelbarrows and moving together and sharing space or using dance spots.

Develop body awareness e.g. realise feet can be used to stamp, can take big steps or walk on tiptoe.

Learn to handle moving objects such as balls, beanbags, quoits, hoops and tyres.

Propel one object with another eg. ball with a bat.

Have opportunities for imaginative play, role-play, stories in movement, expressive movement and rhythmic movement.

Develop concepts of space such as up & down, over & under, high & low, on & off through movement and action that is named eg. roll, jump.

Dynamics of movement eg: fast/slow large/small, sudden or sustained, heavy/light.

Learn how to share, take turns, be aware of and play alongside and with other children.

Have opportunities to play circle games and repeat patterns of movement.

### **Fine Motor Skills**

Objectives in developing fine motor skills are to enable the children to :-

Develop hand \ eye co-ordination & concentration

Use sand & water equipment to develop skills  
eg: pouring, filling, sieving & emptying and explore malleable materials

Learn to use a range of tools and equipment safely  
eg. sawing, drilling & hammering

Manipulate \ control small equipment eg small pegs, beads & construction & puzzles

Use pencils \ brushes \ scissors & other mark making equipment with increasing control

Pick up a single small object  
eg. during block construction and small world activities

Control the computer mouse and other ICT equipment

Use threading, weaving and workshop equipment with increased accuracy & dexterity  
eg. stapler, hole puncher, wrapping and folding

Showing increasing control over clothing and fastenings

Developing a vocabulary to describe actions

## Appendix

### *Hand Dominance*

Left-handed children live in a world dominated by right-handed people. Toys, tools and equipment should be offered so that children can easily use their naturally preferred hand. Whenever possible, tools should be ambidextrous or purchased especially e.g. left-handed scissors.

### Health Promotion

We are a Health Promoting School and as such are very aware of the health and well-being of children, parents and staff.

In addition to nutrition and exercise, we want to encourage healthy life styles in a wider sense:

self esteem, mental and emotional well-being.

- The positive attitudes of children are encouraged by a range of activities such as: healthy snack foods and cooking activities
- We garden and grow our own vegetables
- We organise visits from the dental hygienist and the dentist
- We provide free access to fresh air and exercise daily in outdoor play
- Weekly water play sessions for children and their families

We plan two Healthy Eating weeks during the year to encourage parents and children to try a

variety of healthy balanced snacks.

We also encourage walking or cycling to school rather than using cars.

### **Skills and attitudes developed in physical activities**

Free access to the indoor and outdoor areas offers children many opportunities.

A selection are listed below:

**Confidence**

**Positive attitudes**

**Mobility**

**Agility**

**Body awareness**

**Spatial awareness**

**Temporal awareness**

**Directional**

**awareness**

**Projection skills**

**Construction skills**

## **Communication**

**skills**

## **Movement**

**vocabulary**

**Fine motor and**

**manipulative skills**

**Rhythmic movement**

**Strength**

**Balance**

Independence, self help, initiative, self esteem, risk taking and problem solving

Healthy life style, fitness, relaxation, expressing emotions, learning self control, understanding safety issues, persistence, fairness, co-operation, reflection, exuberance and enthusiasm

Crawling, running, jumping, rolling, swinging, hopping, skipping and galloping

Stretching, climbing, balancing, twisting and dancing

Sensing what it feels like to be upside down, being aware of what part of the body is working, exercising particular muscles and joints, and sensing what it feels like to be out of breath or hot through exercise

Placing the body over, under, through, at the side of, behind and in front, inside and from a range of different perspectives

Judging speed, swinging or sliding fast, pulling up on the assault net slowly, running quickly or faster than a friend

Sideways, backwards, forwards, climbing high, stretching down low, being aware, whilst moving, of others positions in relation to self

Grasping, releasing, rolling, throwing and catching, aiming and kicking

Building, assembling, lifting, carrying, placing and arranging objects

Non-verbal communication, gesture, expression, sharing ideas and plans and negotiating

Developing a vocabulary of movement words with understanding

Appropriate and safe handling of tools, instruments, toys, objects in play activities

Creative expression, responding to stimuli of music and stories

Pulling and pushing trucks, lifting and transporting materials, climbing trees, pedalling and riding trundle toys, climbing, pulling up/swinging on ropes

Walking along planks/low benches, beams, flower-pot stilts,

## **Examples of resources to develop gross and fine motor skills**

The following list of equipment/activities provides some examples, which can be

used outdoors or in a large hall:

- fixed or moveable climbing frame, slide, ladder, boxes, planks, rope ladder, barrel on stand, seesaw, simple pulleys, scramble net, tunnels, balancing bar, house/hidden hole/den, tyres, spools, rocking horse/swing-boat, mats, low balancing bench
- trundle toys, push and pull vehicles, scooters, bicycles, hobby horses, traffic lights and

petrol pumps

- skipping ropes, goal posts, basketball nets, kites, streamers, parachute
- logs and fallen tree trunks, trees to climb
- every day objects for transporting e.g. tyres, crates, blocks, bricks, large boxes
- details of access to local resources e.g. swimming pool, nature reserve

Examples of small equipment/activities, which can be used indoors and outdoors:

- balls, bats, beanbags, hoops, quoits, skittles
- construction toys e.g. lego, bauplay, mobilo, wooden blocks and small world toys
- threading, stacking and screwing toys, peg boards, puzzles
- clay, dough, cooking and woodwork activities, drawing/painting/collage/model-making materials and tools, wind-up and mechanical toys
- dressing up clothes, dolls clothes, role play equipment and materials, puppets
- selection of books which portray physical activity, tape recorder and musical instruments

## **Processes that determine movement development**

### **Cephalo-caudal development and proximo-distal development**

These two processes are crucial in determining movement development

#### *Cephalo-caudal development*

(cephale = head, cauda=tail)

“.....the head is already well developed at birth, in order that the brain can fulfil its role in controlling all bodily functions. By contrast, the feet and legs are relatively under-developed and

are of relatively little importance at this stage, since their functions are not required until later in

life when mobility and locomotion develop”.

*‘Physical Children, Active Learning’ Patricia Maude 2001*

#### *Proximo-distal development*

(proximal=close to the body, distal=further from the centre of the body)

“....motor or movement control emerges from proximal (close to the body) to distal, further from

the centre of the body. In infancy the distal parts of the body, namely the arms, hands and fingers are relatively under-developed because they are not needed for body propulsion and

manipulation. In this way the musculature to the shoulder girdle gains strength before that to the

elbows, wrists, hands and finally to the fingers”.

Distinct lack of differentiation in the joints of the arms is evident for several months after birth

and for several years in relation to the hands. Ability to use the hands and eventually the fingers

effectively develops much later”.

*‘Physical Children, Active Learning’ Patricia Maude 2001*

### **Bi-lateral co-ordination and the importance of the mid-line of the body**

#### *Bi-lateral co-ordination*

Bi-lateral co-ordination means that we integrate both sides of the body, working together to achieve a movement. By nursery/reception age a child should have mastered this skill e.g. holding a piece of paper whilst drawing or cutting with the other hand, jump with two feet

together or catch a big ball co-ordinating both hands simultaneously.

### *The mid- line*

The organisation of movement around the mid-line of the body is vital for normal physical development. Much early movement learning takes place to develop control around the mid-line

(a baby brings it's hands to the mid-line to grasp a rattle, a young child to catch a ball).

The mid-line is the focal point for establishing an upright posture and the infant develops stability mechanisms centrally in order to balance in the vertical position on bottom and later on

feet. By nursery age, a child should have mastered crossing the mid-line i.e. reaching across the centre of the body. If this has not been achieved, a child will be directionally confused and

will not cross their mid-line e.g. use the non dominant hand to grasp an object on that side or

move their whole body in order to avoid crossing the mid-line.

**It is important that adults in the nursery observe the above processes and provide a range of outdoor and indoor activities, which give regular opportunities to practice the above processes.**

*CNS/Pol/PhDv/V2/0503*

6

## **GROSS MOTOR CONTROL**

### **Key Experiences linked to gross motor control**

#### **Initiative and**

#### **Social Relations**

##### **B. Taking care of one's needs**

sweeping with broom/dustpan & brush, pegging paper on easel, putting on coat

##### **G. .Creating & experiencing collaborative play**

pushing each other on the swingboat, rolling hoops to each other, climbing game on logs

#### **Creative**

#### **Representation**

##### **B. Imitating actions and sounds**

being a fireman, using a hose, driving the bus, steering the wheel

##### **C. Pretending and role playing**

dressing up as firemen/builders, setting up a picnic with furniture from the house

##### **D. Making models out of clay, blocks and other materials**

moulding a large lump of clay, pushing/pulling, building with large blocks

building an obstacle course with planks and spools and tyres

##### **E. Drawing and Painting, exploring texture, colour and shape...**

large scale painting on large paper and 3D box models, large weaving

water painting with decorators brushes, chunky chalking on pavement

#### **Music**

##### **A. Moving to music**

marching, hopping, crawling, turning

##### **C. Playing simple musical instruments**

large African drum, cymbals, rainsticks, metal objects hanging on frame

#### **Movement**

##### **A. Moving in non locomotor ways**

swinging arms, bending, stretching, twisting

##### **B. Moving in locomotor ways**

running, jumping, climbing, rolling, hopping

### **C. Moving with objects**

scooting, riding tricycles, pushing wheelbarrows, digging in the garden, sweeping the sand, raking leaves

### **E. Showing creativity in movement**

marching, striding, swinging arms, twisting, stretching, galloping  
moving in response to a stimulus – music, a story, a picture, an idea (animals, weather, shapes, dressing up),

### **G. Acting on movement directions**

“walk to ....”, “lift the parachute high...”, knead the dough...”

### **Space**

#### **A. Filling and emptying**

large sand spades, sandwheels, large jugs, pipes, watering plants

#### **B. Fitting things together and taking them apart**

giant lego, big builder, guttering with water

#### **C. Changing the shape and arrangement of objects**

large wooden blocks, train tracks, cars, large plastic piping, large cardboard tubes

#### **D. Observing things from different spatial viewpoints**

top of climbing frame/play tower, A frame, ladders, stepladders, tree climbing  
lying under and looking up at trees/sky

### **Time**

#### **A. Starting and stopping an action on signal**

moving own bodies to music, playing in a marching band

#### **B. Experiencing and describing rates of movement**

rolling themselves down the hill, rolling tyres/cylinders/cars down ramps,  
riding tricycles up and down slope, swinging in the swingboat

*“There is an eminent early years professor, who says that young children learn more about right and left and how to form their letters when they are on the climbing frame than they do with any amount of tracing letters on*

*a sheet at a table. It’s understanding the relationship between the two halves of your body that teaches you the difference between left and right and it’s being able to move your body and hands to the places, where they have to be, that teaches you how to move them when you come to the fine movement skills of writing”.*

Mary Jane Drummond (extract from BBC2 television programme: ‘Everything to play for’)

CNS/

# APPENDIX

See attached sheets for examples of activities to develop Gross Motor Skills

## **Fine Motor Skills**

Activities to develop skills in this area will include

Opportunities to develop pencil skills through the use of writing patterns, tracing cards, join the dot activities and encouragement of emergent writing.

Opportunities to develop scissors control through the use of a variety of scissors and various types of paper (i.e. thick \ thin \ textured \ shiny). Cutting around pictures on cards and in magazines. Cutting along a straight, curved and zigzag line.

Threading and sewing activities will include sewing through holes in cards and binca, paper weaving and threading with beads and collage material to make necklaces.

A variety of construction activities are always available e.g. meccano \ lego \ luna park.

A variety of water and dry sand activities are always available to encourage pouring.

All computer games enable children to practise and improve their use of the 'mouse'.

## **Gross Motor Skills**

Adapt activities using STEPS principle:

"space, task, equipment, people & success"  
link to creative development and policy