

Gross Motor Activities

Learning Goals:

PH1.1 Demonstrates locomotor skills

PH1.2 Shows stability and balance

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (follows directions)

Walking

Activity: Take a Walk around the Room

- Establish with children a stop and go signal before beginning this activity: clapping hands, striking a drum, striking two rhythm sticks together are examples.
- Explain to children that when they hear the signal, they are to freeze like a statue.
- State that they will now take a walk around the room
- Remind children to move safely and not get too close to other children.
- Say, "Can you walk around the room and stay as far from your friends as you can?"
- Observe children to make sure they are walking without bumping into other children.
- Sound the stop signal.
- Say, "Can you walk sideways without bumping into others?"
- Sound the stop signal.
- Say, "Can you walk backwards without bumping into others?"
- Sound the stop signal.
- Say, "Can you walk very slowly to your carpet square or personal space marker and sit down?"

Teacher Note: Consider playing music as children walk around the room. Keep music at a level that allows children to hear stop and go signals.

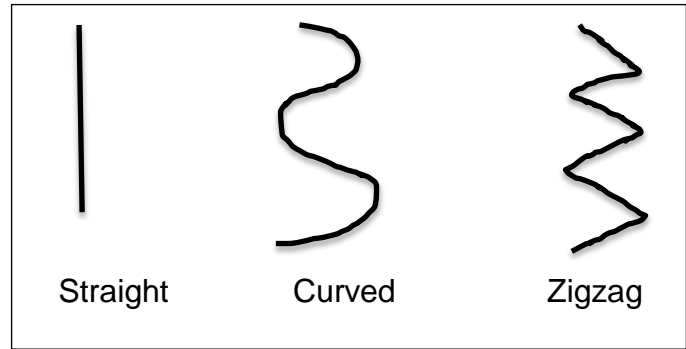
Activity: Walking through the Woods

- Create a woods (obstacle course) on the playground. Use cones or two-liter soda bottles weighted with sand or gravel to represent trees. Tape the caps on the bottles to avoid spills.
- Explain to children that they are going on a picnic and there are some trees they will have to walk around to get to the picnic site.
- Designate a place on the playground as the picnic site.
- Remind children to stay away from their friends as they are walking.
- Review the stop and go signal you have established.
- Say, "Can you walk slowly through the woods?"
- Observe children to make sure they are able to walk without hitting barriers.
- Sound the stop signal.
- Say, "Can you walk faster?"
- Sound the stop signal.
- Say, "Can you walk on tiptoes?"
- Sound the stop signal.
- Say, "Can you walk to the picnic spot?" Children walk to the designated picnic spot.



Activity: Pathways for Movement (Walking)

- Identify an outdoor area that allows space for this activity.
- Develop a pathways chart showing a straight, a curved and a zigzag pathway.
- Show the chart to the children and name and explain each pathway.
- Establish a home base to which children are to return at the end of the activity.
- Demonstrate walking in a straight, curved and zigzag pathway, telling children what each pathway is.
- Walk each pathway again and ask children to name the pathway you're walking.
- Remind children to stay away from their friends as they are walking. Review the stop and go signal you have established.
- Say, "*Can you walk forward in a straight pathway?*"
- Sound the stop signal.
- Say, "*Can you walk in a curved pathway?*"
- Sound the stop signal.
- Say, "*Can you walk in a zigzag pathway?*"
- Sound the signal.
- Have children walk to their home base.



Running

Activity: Pathway for Movement (Running)



- Use the pathways chart to review with children the three pathways for movement
- Demonstrate running in a straight, curved and zigzag pathway.
- Run each pathway again and ask children to name the pathway you're running.
- Provide enough space so that children can run without touching other children.
- Explain to children how different parts of their body work when they are running:
 - Say, "Bend your elbows, then swing your arms when running."
 - Say, "Pick up your feet and move forward as fast as you can."
- Remind children to be careful, to watch where they're going and to avoid running into their friends.
- Reinforce the stop and go signal you have established.
- Say, "Can you run around the playground without bumping into anyone?"
- Sound the stop signal.
- Say, "Now run in a curved pathway."
- Sound the stop signal.
- Say, "Can you run in a zigzag pathway?"
- Sound the stop signal.
- Say, "Can you walk slowly to the home base?"

Activity: Run from the Big Bad Wolf

- Create an outdoor woods (obstacle course). Use cones or two-liter soda bottles weighted with sand or gravel. Tape the caps on the bottles to avoid spills.
- Arrange to have the obstacle course set up ahead of time so children do not have to wait.
- Explain to children that they will run through the woods to get away from the big bad wolf.
- Remind children to avoid running into their friends or the trees as they are running. Review the stop and go signal you have established.
- Say, "The wolf is chasing you. Run around the trees so he can't catch you."
- Sound the stop signal.
- Repeat running sequence several times.
- Say, "Can you run some more? The wolf is still after you."
- Sound the stop signal.
- Say, "The wolf has quit chasing you. Now you can walk back home and rest."

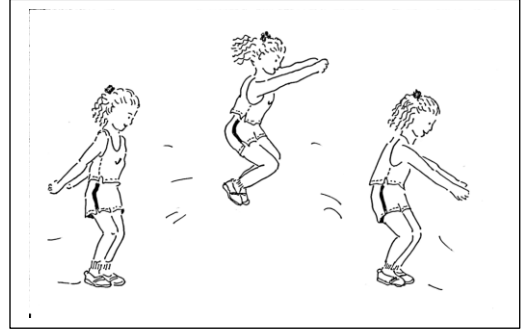
Teacher Note:

- *Observe children as they are running and stop the activity when you see that they are tiring.*
- *Allow children to rest for a few minutes.*

Jumping

Activity: Introduction to Jumping

- Ask children to stand and hold hands to form a circle.
- Next, ask children to drop hands and take three steps back so each child has self space (room to move without touching others).
- Explain to children that they are going to practice jumping. They will jump off two feet and land on two feet.
- Stand in the middle of the circle and demonstrate jumping.



Step 1 – Take off

- Bend knees and crouch body, ready to jump.
- Swing arms forward and upward to take off from the ground.

Step 2 – Flight

- Extend arms into the air as feet leave the floor.

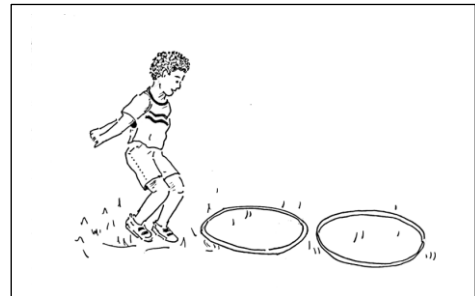
Step 3 – Landing

- Land on both feet. Land with feet apart and body over feet.

- Allow children to practice jumping, following the steps listed.
- Observe children to determine those that need additional help with jumping.
- Notice when children are becoming tired and conclude the activity.

Activity: Jumping Into Ponds

- Allow children to practice jumping into ponds which can either be made from circles of yarn or can be hoops.
- Place a row of six hoops flat on the floor in a straight line. To begin, leave approximately six inches between hoops.
- Challenge children to be jumping frogs. Explain that hoops are ponds and they are to jump from one pond to the next.
- Stress taking off from two feet and landing on two feet. Demonstrate if necessary.
- Allow all children a turn. Give extra attention to children who are having difficulty jumping.
- Allow children additional opportunities to continue to practice jumping.
- Vary the difficulty by extending the space between the hoops from six inches to up to twelve inches.



Activity: Jumping the Creek

- Place two pieces of rope (5 to 6 feet lengths) parallel on the floor or ground. Explain to children that this is a creek and that they are to jump over it.
- Stress taking off from two feet and landing on two feet.
- One at a time have children jump over the creek.
- Vary the difficulty by increasing the distance between the two ropes.

Activity: Lily Pad Jump

- Use personal space markers as lily pads or cut out the pads from green construction paper.
- Place the personal space markers or lily pads on the floor and have the children jump from one to the other.

Teacher Note: *If using construction paper lily pads, tape them securely to the floor to prevent slipping.*

Activity: Jack Be Nimble

- Include this activity as a transition activity from circle time to learning center time, for example.
- Place in the center of the circle a block that children can safely jump over.
- Ask one child at a time to jump over the block while you and the children chant the following, substituting the child's name for "Jack":
Joshua be nimble,
Joshua be quick.
Joshua jump over the candlestick.

Obstacle Courses**Activity: Indoor Obstacle Course**

- Create an indoor obstacle course that includes some of the following: balance beam or taped line on floor, rope to jump over, table to crawl under, chair to walk around, box to move through on stomach, hoop or circle of yarn to hop into and out of, cones or two liter bottles weighted with sand or rocks for children to zigzag through
- Explain to children that you have created an obstacle course that they will have to travel through to get back to their home (carpet square or personal space marker).
- Review the obstacle course with the children.
- Children travel through the obstacle course and return home.

Activity: Outdoor Obstacle Course

- Create an outdoor obstacle course for children to travel through: walk around the climbing structure, crawl through a box or large snap together cube, walk on a balance beam, zigzag around cones or two-liter bottles weighted with sand or rocks.
- Create an obstacle course for children to steer tricycles through. Use cones or two-liter bottles weighted with sand or rocks to create the course.

Galloping

Activity: Gallop Like a Horse

- Show children a picture of a horse and explain that horses gallop and they are going to learn to gallop like a horse.
- Introduce galloping to the children as follows:
“Start with a step and slide the other foot behind the lead foot. The lead foot is the leader and the other foot never goes in front of it.”
- Remind children to move safely and not get too close to other children.
- Reinforce the stop and go signal you have established: clapping hands, striking a drum, striking two rhythm sticks together are examples. When children hear this signal, they are to freeze like a statue.
- *“Pretend you’re riding a horse, so hold on to the reins. You’re going to gallop in a straight line. Start with a step on the leader foot and slide the other foot behind it. Now go faster.”* (When children increase speed it will automatically become a gallop.)
- Allow children to practice galloping.
- Observe children and assist those who are having difficulty galloping.



Teacher Note: Play the song “She’ll Be Coming Round the Mountain” as children are galloping.

Hopping

Activity: Let’s Hop

- Explain to children that they are going to practice hopping.
- Introduce hopping as follows:
“When you hop, you hold one leg off the floor and hop up and down on the other. Can you hold one leg off the floor and hop up and down on the other? Now switch legs and hop on that one.”
- Allow children to practice hopping frequently. Keep practice brief.
- Practice hopping in place, then hopping from one spot to another.

Teacher Notes:

- *Children may have difficulty hopping because they lack the strength and balance to hold one leg in the air while hopping on the other.*
- *If children are having a difficult time hopping, try this: Have them lean against a wall with one hand, lift one foot in the air and hop on the other foot.*
- *Children must be able to hop before they can begin skipping, which is the most difficult motor skill to develop.*

Skipping

Activity: Skipping

- Explain to children that today they are going to learn to skip.
- Introduce skipping as follows:
*“Take a step forward and hop on that foot.
Now, take a step forward on the other foot and hop on it.
Continue to step and hop on one foot, then the other.”*
- Play the song, “Skip to My Lou” as children skip around the room.
- Allow children to practice skipping regularly.



Teacher Notes:

- *Remember that children must be able to hop before they can skip and that skipping is the most difficult motor skill to develop. Only introduce skipping if you think children are ready for this.*
- *Avoid frustrating children if they are unable to skip. Some five year olds will be able to skip while others will not develop this skill until later.*

Throwing

Learning Goal:

PH1.3 Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills (throwing)

- Provide a bucket or basket and beanbags.
- Establish a line on which children are to stand.
- Invite children to stand on the line and toss the beanbags into the basket.

Teacher Notes:

- *Make sure that each child is successful in this activity.*
- *Move the line forward for children who seem to need this and backward for children who need more challenge.*