

Functional Playground Activities

Functional play is a major part of typical child development. It allows children to develop the gross motor skills they need for everyday function in a fun and playful environment. The playground can be a great place for children to develop gross motor skills such as strength, balance, motor planning and coordination. Below are some easy and simple activities for your child to try on the playground. Visiting your child's new school playground can help them to develop these skills and prepare for outdoor play times at school.

- Hopscotch: helps develop balance, higher level coordination, strength and endurance - children can draw their own hopscotch course to help incorporate fine motor skills as well
- Swings: helps to promote bilateral awareness, trunk control and higher-level coordination with pumping
- Jungle-gym climbing: helps to develop motor planning, coordination, strength, flexibility, balance and body awareness
- Tag: a great social game that works on motor planning, spatial awareness and endurance (raises heart rate)
- Climbing up and down hills and walking on uneven surfaces: builds strength, balance and endurance
- Kicking/throwing a ball or playing catch: helps to develop better hand-eye/feet coordination and motor planning as well as social skills
 - Try different sized balls, different types (textures, balls with sounds, different colors, different weights), beanbags or balloons
- Jumping off of playground borders, jumping with two feet together, jumping on one foot, forward, backwards, over obstacles
- Monkey bars: works on building upper extremity strength and trunk strength
- Utilize the playground equipment you have such as ladders, ropes, stairs etc. as a great way to promote strength and coordination
- Wooden beams can be used as balance beams for children to practice walking forward, backwards, and sideways with the minimal support needed for safety and success
- Slides: help promote bilateral hand activity, coordination, balance, and trunk control



These are just a few examples of different outdoor activities. It is important to be creative to get children moving in a fun way. Remember to provide support and supervision as needed for safety.

