

# Gross Motor Development 0 to 6 Years

## The Development of Gross Motor Skills

If you have ever taken your child to be seen by a specialist, you may have been asked, "How old was your child when they rolled, sat & walked?" These questions are called milestones, and are asked because they can assist with determining the level of your child's development. For the most part, all children learn to do certain things at certain ages. As with any rule, there are always exceptions. Therefore ages associated with the milestones should be used only as general guidelines.

Gross motor skills are the skills we use to move our whole body, arms & legs. They include running, jumping, walking & balance. The development of these skills begins when the child is in the womb & continues throughout life. Gross motor skills generally develop in an order and build upon each other. As a result, if a stage of development is missed or delayed, the higher level skills will also be delayed or may never develop at all.

### Birth to 2 Months

Obviously a child will not be running, jumping, or even sitting at this age. However, their gross motor skills are developing and include the manner in which they move their head, trunk, arms & legs. When lying on their back, the newborn's head will be turned slightly to one side, arms will be against their sides and bent at the elbows and their legs will be pulled up against themselves. When lying on their stomach, the baby will begin to move its head, but their arms will remain under their body & they may occasionally kick their legs.

### 3 to 5 Months

The baby will gain greater control over their head, arms & legs. When lying on their back, their head will be facing forward & when on their stomach they will be able to lift their head & shoulders. The baby will bring their hands together when on their backs and prop up on their forearms when on their tummy.

### 6 to 8 Months

At 6 months, the child will pull themselves up to sitting while lying on their backs & holding onto your fingers.

As they approach 8 months, they will progress from sitting while leaning on their hands to sitting without supports. At 8 months they will be able to move from lying on their tummy to sitting on their own, as well as rocking when kneeling on their hands & knees.

### 9 to 11 Months

The child will begin to crawl & pull themselves up on a rail or furniture into standing. They will become able to move from standing to sitting & sit alone for extended periods of time. During this time, the child will progress from crawling to standing independently, and eventually begin to walk.

### 12 to 14 Months

Initially the child will walk while holding onto something (this is called cruising) & with feet wide apart & hands in front of themselves. By 14 months the child will become capable of climbing into a small chair, walk forwards & backwards. They will also be able to pick up objects from the floor, squat to play, & play with push & pull toys.

### 15 to 17 Months

By this point, the child should be walking forward

Visit Us Online at:  
[www.skillbuildersonline.com](http://www.skillbuildersonline.com)

Occupational Therapy  
*Skills for the job of living.*

Email Us at:  
[info@skillbuildersonline.com](mailto:info@skillbuildersonline.com)

# Gross Motor Development 0 to 6 Years

well & be capable of walking backwards & sideways. By 17 months they will be climbing everything including steps & creep backwards down stairs. They should be able to kick a ball, through overhand, straddle & maneuver four wheeled toys, and seldom fall when walking.

## 18 to 20 Months

Around 18 months, the child will be able to walk up & down stairs while holding one hand. By 20 months, they should be able to bend over and look between their legs, climb into an adult chair, carry toys when walking & begin to run & jump.

## 21 to 23 Months

During this period, the child will become able to ascend & descend steps with a railing, jump in place, and run well. They will become capable of pedaling a tricycle & seating themselves at a table.

## 2 Years

At 2 years of age, the child will start to jump off the ground & from a step with both feet. They will run well without falling & start to walk along a balance beam. When going up or down

stairs they will bring both feet to the same step.

## 2 Years & 6 Months

By 2 ½ years of age, the child will stand on one foot & step on a balance beam with both feet. They will climb stairs with alternating feet & jump in place. The child will be capable of standing on one foot & walking on tip toes.

## 3 Years

3 years is characterized by refined walking & running skills. The child will be able to climb & descend stairs with alternating feet & run on their toes. They can also hop on one foot, pedal a tricycle well & balance on one foot.

## 4 Years

In their fourth year, the child should be able to walk on a 3 ½" wide board, skip on alternating feet, and balance on one foot for 10 seconds. In addition, the child will master the tricycle, become capable of catching a 10" ball that is bounced from 5 feet.

## 5 Years

As the child enters their fifth year, they become proficient

at changing between sitting, standing, and squatting. They will be able to sit upright in a chair, jump over 1 foot obstacles & distinguish between right & left.

## 6 Years

As a child turns 6 years, the ability to bat a ball will emerge, but they will be a better batter than catcher. They will also begin to ride a bicycle & kick a ball from a running start. When the child approaches 7 years, they should be able to throw with accuracy & catch a small ball with one hand.

If you have any concerns regarding your child's gross motor development, consulting a health care professional such as an Occupational Therapist may help. Occupational Therapists are trained in evaluating growth & development, as well as treating developmental delays.

***Please see the therapeutic activities & games section of our website for specific activities you can enjoy with your child to develop their gross motor skills.***

[www.skillbuildersonline.com](http://www.skillbuildersonline.com)  
Copyright © 2002 Skill Builders. All Rights Reserved.

Visit Us Online at:  
[www.skillbuildersonline.com](http://www.skillbuildersonline.com)

Occupational Therapy  
*Skills for the job of living.*

Email Us at:  
[info@skillbuildersonline.com](mailto:info@skillbuildersonline.com)