



Trauma
Care

Newsletter

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What's the teacher on about????

Seven most common problems you could hear about in the first few years of pre-school.

Fine Motor Skills

When it comes to using gross motor skills — things like walking, jumping, and running — your little dynamo probably doesn't need much encouragement. But it's equally important that kids work on their **fine motor skills** — small, precise thumb, finger, hand, and wrist movements — because they support a host of other vital physical and mental skills.

"Stacking blocks, for instance, involves not just picking up the blocks, but knowing what to do with them and planning out the action," says Gay Girolami, a physical therapist and executive director of the Pathways Awareness Foundation.

How can you encourage your child's fine motor skills?

As any parent who's ever heard "Me do it!" knows, toddlers don't need much prodding to try new things. Of course, your child won't be able to do everything right away. But with encouragement, support, and lots of time to learn, he might surprise you. So back off and let him try his hand at simple tasks, like getting dressed (he can start looping large buttons through buttonholes) and making breakfast (hand him a spatula, a slice of toast, and a jar of jam and let him get busy).

Gross Motor Skills

Gross motor skills involve the large muscles of the body that enable such functions as walking, kicking, sitting upright, lifting, and throwing a ball. A person's gross motor skills depend on both muscle tone and strength. Low muscle tone, or hypotonia, is a characteristic of several disabling conditions such as Down syndrome, genetic or muscle disorders, or central nervous system disorders.



Gross Motor Ability is a Critical Life Skill:

Gross Motor skills are important for major body movement such as walking, maintaining balance, coordination, jumping, and reaching. Gross motor abilities share connections with other physical functions. A student's ability to maintain upper body support, for example, will affect his ability to write. Writing is a fine motor skill. Students with poor gross motor development, may have difficulty with activities such as writing, sitting up in an alert position, sitting erect to watch classroom activity, and writing on a blackboard.

If you suspect your child has gross motor weaknesses that may affect his education, discuss this possibility with your child's IEP team. Evaluation by a physical and/or occupational therapist can determine how severe the problem is and provide therapy to improve your child's gross motor skills.



Muscle Tone

A child is said to have low muscle tone — hypotonia — if his muscles are on the loose, floppy side. You may find it unusually easy to move your child's arms and legs when they are relaxed, or that he seems to slip through your arms when you pick him up. Although hypotonia is not a well-understood phenomenon, children with low muscle tone often have delayed motor skills, muscle weakness, and / or coordination problems.

While low muscle tone in an infant can be caused by a variety of fairly serious problems including hypothyroidism, Down syndrome, or a neurological problem, if your child was not diagnosed with the problem until after his first birthday, his problem is likely to be milder. Because your toddler needs to build muscular strength and agility, it's important that he be as active as possible. It doesn't much matter what he does — whether it's swimming, gymnastics, or general running around — as long he does something that gets him going. Pick an activity he likes to do, simply because he's more likely to stick with it if it's fun. Although physical therapy is sometimes recommended for children with low muscle tone, few studies have been done and experts disagree on how effective it is. Mild hypotonia typically improves over time with or without therapy.

Sensory Integration

Everyone receives constant messages from their senses. Most people are able to use these messages to appropriately interact with their environment. For example, as you are reading this, your clothing is providing tactile information to your skin. Your brain receives this information, but doesn't focus on it, allowing you to focus your attention on visual information and continue reading this.



Being able to quickly process and integrate sensory information promotes learning and development. Consider the richness of varied sensory input throughout a child's day; being carried in different positions, taking a bath, the feeling of getting dressed, eating with fingers, and being in a noisy or soothing environment. Being able to integrate these different sensations helps children to "make sense" of their world.

Children with sensory integration issues do not process the information they receive through the senses efficiently, making everyday tasks difficult and sometimes leading to emotional, social, and physical distress.

Inability to Concentrate

Getting distracted is normal for young children, but can prove to be a major problem when the child grows up and is unable to concentrate on academics and school work. Lack of concentration or an inability to focus on the task at hand is a common concern that many parents have. Irrespective of how bad the situation might seem, do not resort to conventional standards of performance at school. Comparison with other children should be avoided at all times.

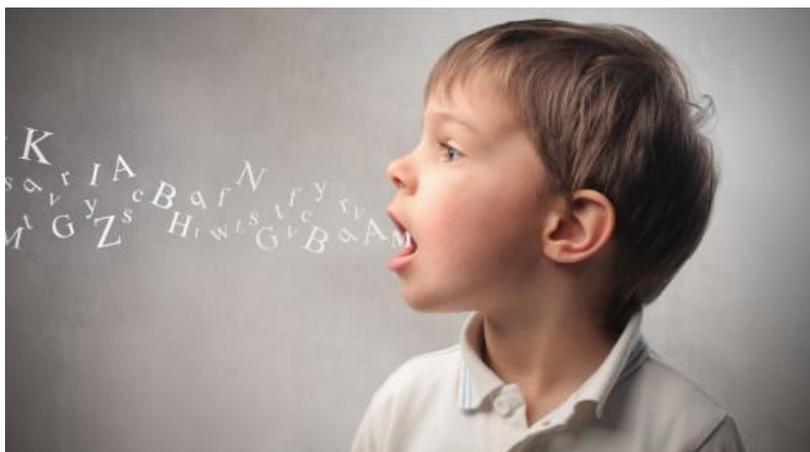
Children have a lower attention span lose interest in an activity or object quickly. Keeping them occupied with work or something to do all the time is not an easy task. There are some major causes of lack of concentration in children that need to be considered before you start getting worried. Once deciphered, some of these causes can be tackled easily.



Fatigue remains one of the most common causes of lack of concentration. Children and teens are full of bubbly energy, and the adrenalin flow at times leads them to indulge in excessive physical activity, late nights and other such activities that tire them out. These activities often result in inadequate sleep and drowsiness in the morning, which can hamper concentration. Inadequate sleep also has serious emotional and physical repercussions that can even thwart efforts at improving concentration in your child. In children, sometimes the inability to concentrate is linked to improper diet and unhealthy eating habits. If the child is not being taught what is of interest, there is a great likelihood of the child becoming indifferent to other subjects, as well. It has been observed that anxiety can also cause child concentration problems, as the young brain is unable to perceive situations and stimuli in their proper perspectives.

Speech

It's important to discuss early speech and language development, as well as other developmental concerns, with your doctor at every routine well-child visit.



Before 12 Months

It's important for kids this age to be watched for signs that they're using their voices to relate to their environment. Cooing and babbling are early stages of speech development.

12 to 15 Months

Kids this age should have a wide range of speech sounds in their babbling (like p, b, m, d, or n), begin to imitate and approximate sounds and words modeled by family members, and typically say one or more words (not including "mama" and "dada") spontaneously.

From 18 to 24 Months

Though there is a lot of variability, most toddlers are saying about 20 words by 18 months and 50 or more words by the time they turn 2. By age 2, kids are starting to combine two words to make simple sentences, such as "baby crying" or "Daddy big."

From 2 to 3 Years

Parents often witness an "explosion" in their child's speech. Your toddler's vocabulary should increase (to too many words to count) and he or she should routinely combine three or more words into sentences.

The Difference Between Speech and Language

Speech and language are often confused, but there is a distinction between the two:

Speech is the verbal expression of language and includes articulation, which is the way sounds and words are formed.

Language is much broader and refers to the entire system of expressing and receiving information in a way that's meaningful. It's understanding and being understood through communication — verbal, nonverbal, and written.

Hearing

Any kind of early hearing loss can be a serious problem. It can undermine the foundation of language development, which experts believe is built during the early months and years of life. If undiagnosed and untreated, pediatric hearing impairment can result in major language development problems.



But it can be very hard to identify hearing loss until signs of speech and developmental delays show up -- many hearing impairments aren't identified until the child is 2. However, a variety of techniques exist to test hearing in children, regardless of the child's age.

If you suspect that your child may have a hearing problem, talk to your pediatrician. Get your child's hearing evaluated as soon as possible. If your child has been diagnosed with a hearing impairment, seek help right away. Experts agree that the earlier children with hearing loss get help, the better their chances of reaching their full learning and developmental potential.

As a parent, you are likely to be the first person to notice hearing problems in your child. Some early indications of a hearing problem include:

- Not reacting to loud noises
- Not responding to your voice
- Making simple sounds that eventually taper off
- Pull or rub an ear
- Be constantly irritable for no apparent reason
- Become listless or inattentive
- Not understand directions
- Often ask for the television or radio to be louder
- Have a fever
- Have ear pain

Above are issues dealt with most often by pre-school and senior primary school teachers.

We Worry About What A Child
Will Become Tomorrow,
Yet We Forget That
He Is Someone Today
~Stacia Tauscher



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Play Therapy * Counselling * Trauma Counselling

Please note that this information must not be used for diagnostic purposes. Please visit a medical professional for a correct diagnosis.