

Motor Planning

Unless we are learning a new skill, our movements become automatic. Motor planning is developed through experience; a child will learn to stand, balance, take a step, walk, then run and jump and so on. Each skill is learnt and used to further develop mastery over movement ability for new actions. Motor planning is the ability to have the idea for the movement required, to be able to organise movements for the activity, to sequence the movements in a coordinated manner and to know through feedback from the body if the action has been completed correctly with the ability to adjust to the demands of the task. Motor planning is highly complex, but a normal part of development. Difficulties in this area have a significant impact on the ability to complete everyday tasks.

The child may present as:

- Awkward and clumsy when moving around
- Untidy in appearance
- Avoidant of new tasks
- During tasks, the child can describe what they need to do but they have difficulty carrying out the actions
- Delayed in handwriting development
- Unable to complete construction activity
- Perseverant
- The class clown to distract from their difficulties
- Having difficulty with dressing and feeding themselves
- Consistently making the same mistakes
- Delayed in fine motor skills

Activities to support a child with motor planning difficulties can be completed with a whole class, small groups or individually. Providing movement based activity will enable the brain to receive information about movements to aid laying down of motor memory to develop motor skills. Repetition is very important for children with this difficulty.

- Sensory motor circuits in a small group with support – see Movement: Sensory section.
- Encouraging dressing in front of a mirror
- Animal walks
- Movement to sequences – *Simon Says*
- Completing movements in slow motion while talking through it

- If learning a new skill, encourage the child to say what they need to do first, have a go and then discuss how it went and what could be done differently.
- Buddy the child with someone who will encourage the child to practice.
- Complete fine motor activities – see *Movement:Handwriting* and other activities.
- Complete Body Awareness activities – see Body Awareness page – in a small group.