



GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT AT DIA

What is it and WHY is it important?

Gross Motor Skill Development is incredibly important for a child's growth and independence. These movements related to their large muscles (like arms, legs and torso), help encourage independence and allow them to explore the world around them. In addition, gross motor skills also aid in a child's cognitive development.

At DIA, we focus on developing gross motor skills:

- To build self-esteem
- To develop problem solving skills
- To develop listening skills
- To encourage cooperation
- To develop hand/eye coordination
- And because it's FUN!

What does Gross Motor Development look like at DIA?

Each month we have a new theme to help with gross motor development in the classroom. Our teachers will introduce their class to a new item (like bean bags, balls, exercise cubes, hula hoops, noodles, or parachute) and will play with them as a group - often in form of a game or obstacle course. Our friends are then allowed to have some time for creative play with the item. We have so much fun while developing skills at the same time! Activities are tailored to each age group and specific classrooms to focus on skills that are important to their individual development.





Developing Our Skills Outside!

DIA students are outside at least twice a day, for 45 minutes each, giving them the awesome opportunity to develop their gross motor skills in the sunshine! Our playground is divided into two areas, one for the toddlers and one for the preschoolers, filled with thoughtfully chosen age-appropriate equipment. With bikes to ride on, structures to climb on (under teacher supervision), and lots of space to run, jump, and skip, DIA kids develop their skills through play without even knowing it!



Here's how you can work on Gross Motor Development at home!

For Toddlers:

- Turn on your favorite music and have a dance party
- Roll the ball back and forth
- Sing "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes"
- Jump like frogs
- Kick a beach ball back and forth
- Hit a balloon back and forth

For Preschoolers:

- Play tag
- Dance in your kitchen while making dinner
- Play catch
- Hula hoop
- Swim
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Bike
- Hike
- Kick the soccer ball around
- Toss the Frisbee
- Play football
- Shoot hoops

Helpful Resources

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/blog/moving-and-grooving-infants-and-toddlers>

<https://www.aap.org>

<https://handsonaswegrow.com/gross-motor-activities-preschoolers/>

<https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/gross-motor-skills-10-activities-for-1-and-2-year-olds/>



About Karen

Karen Hughes has been our wonderful Physical Education Teacher at DIA since October 2015. Her favorite thing about working with kids is watching them discover the many things that they can do (that they didn't know they can do!) She loves playing games with the kids and says that "DIA has such a great school family that it doesn't feel like coming to work. It feels like hanging out and playing with your friends!"