

# Big Body Play for Toddlers

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# Icebreaker

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- Think of a memory you have with big body play? Gross motor play? Rough and Tumble play?
- Share with a partner at your table.
- A few can share with the whole group.

# What is Big Body or Gross Motor Play?

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- All play that uses the full body. Sometimes it is rough, and other times it is not, but it is always “boisterous” and “vigorous.”
  - Can include body contact with others or objects
  - Can be with others like chasing, running, and climbing
  - Can be solitary like rolling, stomping, and spinning
- This type of play should help children to use all parts of their bodies to learn and develop.

# Infant Motor Development

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- Infants learn using their senses, including their vestibular and proprioceptive senses.
- The body and brain are developing together.
- Infants need uninterrupted time to play and explore with as much freedom as possible. They need to interact with age appropriate materials, other infants, and adults.
- Tummy time is essential! Containers can prevent normal development.
- Space, time, and meaningful interactions are the most important things we can offer.

# Toddler Motor Development

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- Toddlers will challenge themselves to find out what they can do.
- Movement becomes automatic. They repeat movements over and over.
- Children are not able to move on to other types of learning until basic movements are automatic.
- They run, grab, and crash. Nothing is subtle.
- Toddlers can learn gentle touches, with help from the caregiver.

# Ages and Stages Questionnaire

## 12 Month

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- When holding on to furniture, does your baby bend down and pick up a toy from the floor and then return to standing position?
- While holding onto furniture, does your baby lower herself with control?
- Does your baby walk beside furniture while holding on with only one hand?
- If you hold both hands just to balance your baby, does he take several steps without tripping or falling?
- When you hold one hand just to balance you baby, does she take several steps?
- Does your baby stand up in the middle of the floor by himself and take several steps forward?

## 24 Month

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- Does your child walk down stairs if you hold onto one of her hands?
- When you show your child how to kick a large ball, does he try to kick the ball by moving his leg forward or walking into it?
- Does you child walk either up or down at least two steps by herself? She may hold the railing or wall.
- Does your child run fairly well, stopping herself without bumping into things or falling?
- Does your child jump with both feet leaving the floor at the same time?
- Without holding onto anything for support, does your child kick a ball by swinging his leg forward?

# ASQ Activities

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- With those at your table, look at the ASQ Activities for a 12- or 24-month-old child.
- Thinking about the points from the previous slide, if you knew a child was struggling with one of those point, which of these activities could be used to help strengthen it?
- Discuss at your table how you might implement one of these activities or come up with one of your own.

# Developmental Benefits

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## Motor

- Building a Strong Foundation
- Always Moving
- Controlling Movement
- Still Need to Move

## Communication

- Nonverbal Communication
- Body Language

## Social emotional

- Self Awareness
- Self Regulation
- Impulse Control
- Touch
- Aggression

# Why is it important for Toddlers?

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- Child must build gross motor skills to improve them. Starting early in the toddler years will help them to be more skillful in preschool and up!
- Toddlers are made to move! They are not able to sit still. They need to be moving and interacting with others, the environment, and everything around them to learn.
- Big body play helps children to form relationships and practice social skills. They learn to be respectful of others' bodies and read cues about others' feelings.
- This play helps children to build a positive self concept. They experience success, independence, self-motivation, and risk taking.

# Mistaken Identity

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- Big Body Play can be mistaken for misbehavior. Many of the behaviors that are part of this type have risk associated with them:
  - Running
  - Climbing
  - Rolling
  - Rough housing
  - Throwing
  - Hitting, kicking, pushing, running into each other

# Is it a RISK or a HAZARD?

A **risk** is something that a child can see and therefore can perform an assessment.

A **hazard** on the other hand, is not planned for because the child can not anticipate it.

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## Steps to Assess Risk





What Big Body Play looks like for Toddlers?

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# Teaching Big Body Play

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- Planned activities
  - Sometimes you are going to plan specific activities that encourage gross motor development and give children the opportunity to use their whole body for play. This would be included in your lesson planning.
- In the moment guidance
  - At other times children are going to begin engaging in this type of play naturally. It is your job to help guide it and keep it safe. Children start to form their own rules around this type of play, it is important to encourage their power while keeping everyone safe.
- Help to develop appropriate boundaries and safety
  - In both of these situations, it is the teachers' jobs to ensure that everyone is safe and respected. You can do this by discussing expectations and noticing.



# Encouraging Movement in Classroom Centers

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# Activities

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# Let's...

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- Stretch
- Run
- Gallop
- Roll
- Push and Pull
- Lift
- Climb
- Move backwards

# Heavy Work

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- Fill up bag or buckets with heavy items.
- Fill two-liter bottles partially with water.
- Outside encourage children to fill buckets at the sandbox.
- Allow children to carry or try to carry these heavy items.
- Encourage children to try to push or move heavy items outside where it is safe.

# Ball Play

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- Toddlers start by throwing or rolling balls. Rolling can help children to learn the rules of catch—that it goes to someone else, then they throw it back.
- Learning to play ball can be tough because the balls that are the easiest to throw are not the same as the balls that are easiest to catch!
- Catch at this age involves the child throwing and the adult catching.
- Balls can also be fun to kick and chase. Children begin to learn to walk into the ball or swing their leg to kick it. They may then run after it.
- This type of play can be planned or happen naturally when started by children.

# Pretend Animals

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- This can arise naturally. Teachers can add to the play by asking questions or giving prompts that encourage movements.
  - Are you a puppy? Can you wag your tail like a puppy does? Can you chase your tail?
- The caregiver can give prompts that might encourage children to pretend to be animals.
  - Let's line up and walk like ducklings in a line.
  - What types of animals live on a farm? What sound does that animal make? How do they walk? How do they jump?

# Chase

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- Chase is one of the most universal games in existence. It is often the first game children play when getting to know each other.
- Toddlers may need some direct instruction to learn the rules of chase.
  - Teaching to say “I’m not playing” rather than running if they do not wish to play.
  - Teaching how to join by simply running from the chaser.
  - Teaching how to catch someone appropriately with gently touch.
- To help toddlers learn the rules, it is often easiest to start by playing with an adult.

# Shapes in Motion

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- Tell children you are going to walk around the room together. Explain that you will change the shape of your body and they should try to make the same shape.
  - Arms to the outside
  - Arms above head
  - Hands on hips
  - Tilt head
  - Crouching

# Shake, Wiggle, and Vibrate

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- Talk about the meaning of these words. How do they differ from each other? Ask the toddlers to move in the following ways, demonstrate if needed.
  - Move like a snake
  - Look like soup sloshing in a bowl
  - Shake like a baby's rattle
  - Wiggle like you're being tickled
  - Look like a leaf in the wind
  - Shiver like you're cold
  - Vibrate like an electric toothbrush

# References

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