# Motor Skills in the Early Years

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# Content

- What are fine and gross motor skills and why might a child struggle with them.
- Other factors that influence fine motor skills
- Top activities to improve gross motor skills
- Top activities to improve fine motor skills.
- 3 important takeaways
- What we offer to help you further.

# What is Gross Motor Skills?

- Gross motor skills involve large-scale, whole-body movements, such as walking, rolling over, jumping, climbing, and throwing a ball, to name a few.
- Any movement which involved using all your muscles in a coordinated way.









# What is Fine Motor Skills?

- Fine motor skills are ***movements that require coordination of the fingers, hands and wrists*** to grab, hold and manipulate objects to complete everyday tasks.
- Fine motor skills are essential for smaller movements and actions, like picking things up or holding a pencil.









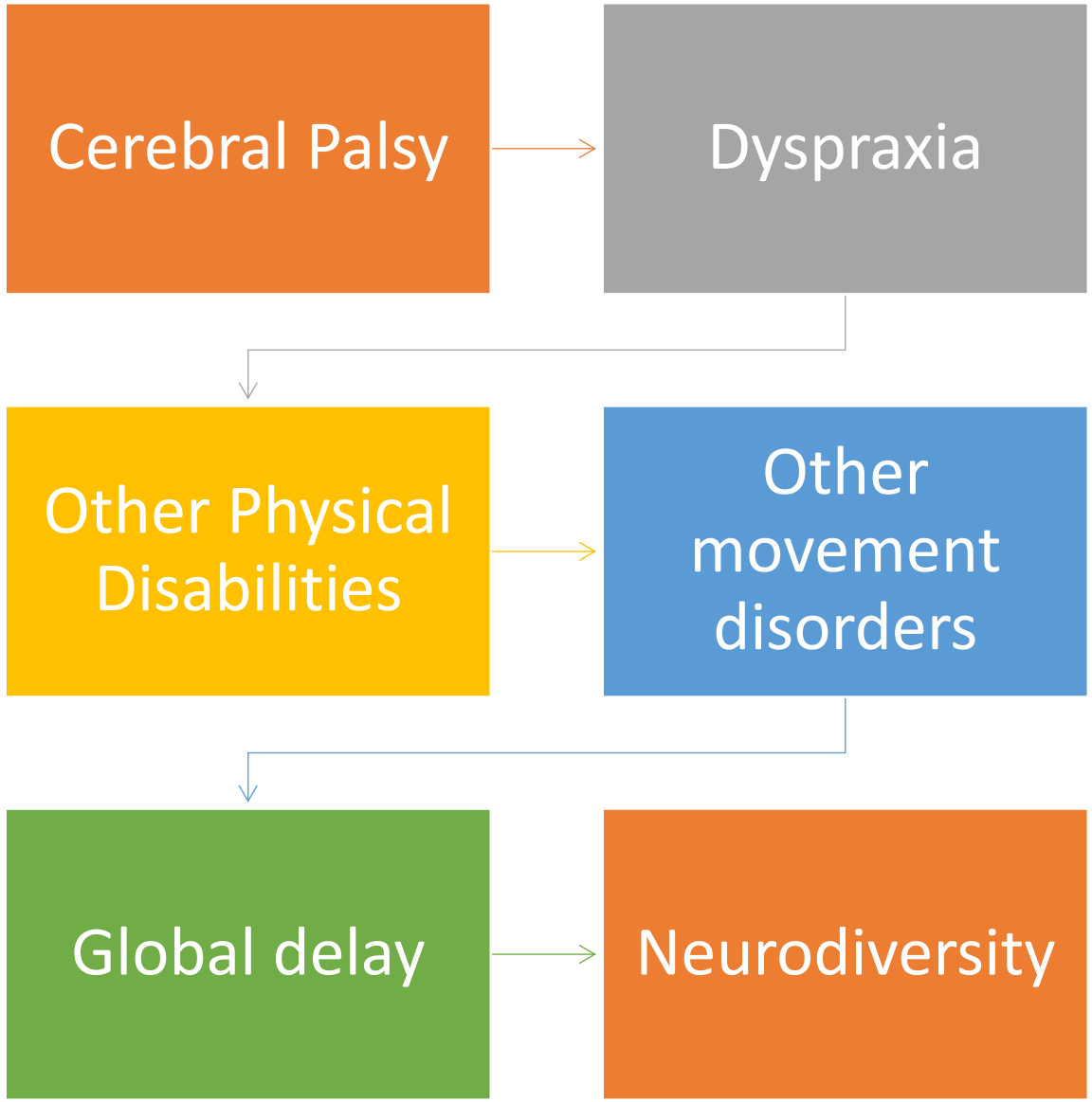
## Why are Motor Skills Important?

*Motor skills are essential for overall development and contribute significantly to a child's ability to interact with their world effectively.*

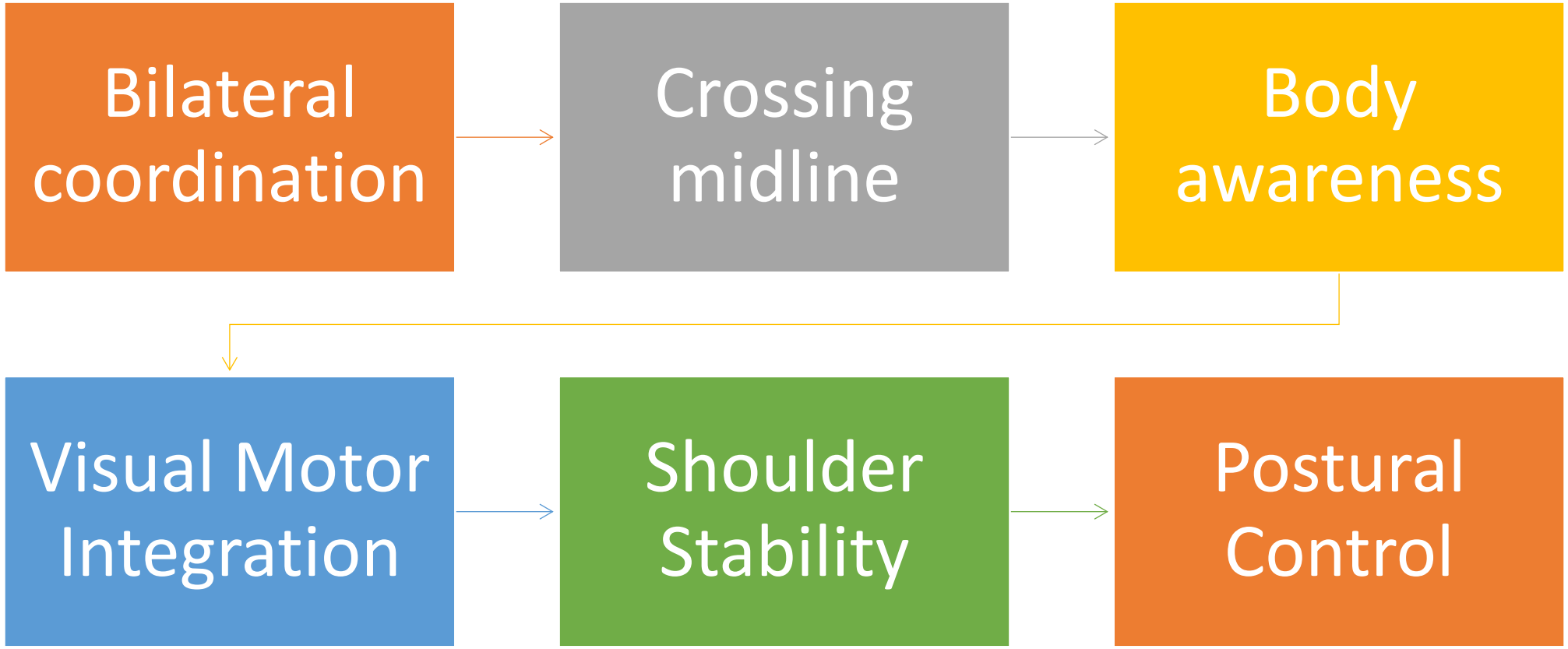
- **Physical Development**: They help develop muscles and coordination. Fine motor skills improve hand-eye coordination, while gross motor skills enhance overall body movement.
- **Cognitive Development**: Engaging in motor activities stimulates brain development, aiding in cognitive skills like problem-solving and spatial awareness.
- **Physical Activity and Learning**: Movement is linked to cognitive function. Children who engage in physical activities often demonstrate improved memory and learning capabilities
- **Handwriting Skills**: Fine motor skills are essential for developing handwriting, typing, etc, which is crucial for effective written communication in school.
- **Attention and Focus**: Activities that develop motor skills require concentration and discipline, fostering better attention spans in academic settings.
- **Social Skills**: Many motor activities are done in groups, promoting teamwork, sharing, and communication among peers.
- **Confidence and Independence**: Accomplishing motor tasks boosts self-esteem and encourages children to explore their environment independently and managing their personal care.
- **Emotional Regulation**: Physical activity can serve as a way for children to express their emotions and reduce stress.
- **Health and Fitness**: Developing these skills encourages an active lifestyle, albeit sometimes with support, fostering long-term physical health.


FINE
MOTOR
SKILLS
And their
milestones
for babies and
toddlers:

Why might a child struggle with their motor skills?



# Other critical motor tasks that impact fine motor skills










# Top Gross Motor Skill Activities

**Bilateral Coordination:**

- Baking using a rolling pin, playing with play dough
- Riding a bike, swimming, clapping games.
- Any activity that involve controlling one hand while the other hand is doing something else.

**Crossing the midline:**

- Drawing a figure of 8 on its side and big rainbows on the interactive whiteboard.
- Simon Says
- Car play with a track on the floor.

**Body Awareness:**

- Spatial awareness activities include giving your child instructions like stand in front of chair or bed or any object, stand behind it, stand next to it, sit on it, can you fit under it.
- Imitate animal movements e.g. frog jump, kangaroo hop, bear, gorilla, elephant, giraffe, cat, bunny etc

# There are many components of Fine motor skills development

- Hand and Finger Strength
- Grasping: Pincer and Tripod
- Hand eye coordination.
- Wrist Stability
- Finger Isolation
- Dexterity

# Top Fine Motor Skills Activities

**Hand and Finger Strength:**

Hand aerobics

Theraputty activities

**Activities to promote a functional pencil grasp**:

The nip and flip game

Using extra small crayons

Suckers

**Hand eye Coordination:**

Threading and lacing activities

Catching a ball

Playing skittles

Balloon toss

Cutting sticking.








# 3 Important Takeaways

1. When we talk about Fine Motor Skills, remember, it's not just about what's going on 'in the hands' but what is happening in the rest of the body.
2. Remember that both neurotypical and neurodiverse children can struggle with their motor development.
3. You don't need to do separate  fine motor skills sessions, just build on the good practice that you already do.

# How we can help

- Motor skills Toolkit-Local Offer
- Motor skills online training:  Next one is March 11th 10am 12pm
- usha.mistry@barnet.gov.uk