
EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION

Get help with gross motor skills

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) is a statewide program for families with children birth to age 3, with developmental delays, disabilities, or certain medical diagnoses that may impact development. ECI services support families as they learn to help their children grow and learn.

As an early care and education teacher, you may have a child in your infant or toddler room who needs extra help with the development of gross motor skills. These are skills that use the larger muscles of the body. Children with gross motor delays may have problems with their balance, body strength, and overall mobility. Even though some children may take a little more time to develop their gross motor skills, they can still join their peers in daily activities to increase their strength, balance, and coordination.

SKILLS THAT USE THE LARGER MUSCLES OF THE BODY.

To help promote and improve the gross motor development of infants and toddlers, you can include the following types of equipment in your program:

- small push-pull toys and riding toys without pedals,
- gyms that allow infants to grasp or kick at items,
- large blocks and other construction toys, and
- balls of various sizes that can be rolled, thrown, or kicked.

If a child in your program is receiving Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services, the child's parent might like services to be provided during class time. ECI provides services in the child's natural environment or familiar setting, including at home or in a classroom, park, library, or other community setting.

If services are provided in your classroom, the ECI

provider (such as an occupational therapist or physical therapist) will work with you to integrate sessions into your existing class routines. The ECI therapist may help you arrange your classroom, suggest new or different ways to use the toys and equipment in your class, or plan activities that help all children develop gross motor skills.

ECI is a statewide program within the Texas Health and Human Services Commission for families who have infants or toddlers (birth to age 3) with qualifying medical diagnoses or developmental delays.

Resources

To learn more about gross motor activities for all the children in your class, here are two resources you may find helpful:

Play activities to encourage motor development in child care. Activities can include running, jumping, pitching bean bags, tossing and catching balls, pushing toy strollers, and filling and emptying buckets and other containers. <https://childcare.extension.org/play-activities-to-encourage-motor-development-in-child-care/>

Perceptual and motor development domain. *Perception* refers to the process of taking in and interpreting sensory information. *Motor development* refers to children's ability to control their body movements. www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/itf09perc-motdev.asp ■