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## EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION

# Building motor skills

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Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) is a division within the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). ECI programs provide services to families with children birth to 36 months of age with developmental delays or disabilities. For more information about DARS/ECI, call 1-800-628-5115 or visit [www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis](http://www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis).

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Early Childhood Intervention services (ECI) are provided to families that have infants or toddlers with qualifying disabilities or developmental delays. You may have heard ECI provides services in the child's *natural environment* or familiar setting. This means services can be provided where children without disabilities regularly go—for example, a child care center, park, library, or other community setting. Even though most ECI services are provided at home, some parents may ask for ECI services to be provided in another familiar setting like their child's care program.

Caregivers often have a child in an infant or toddler group 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 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 strength, balance, and coordination.

Consider using common toys and equipment—materials you already have—to promote gross motor development. These include the following:

- Small push-pull toys and riding toys without pedals
- Gyms that allow infants to grasp or kick at items
- Large blocks or construction toys
- Balls of various sizes that can be rolled, thrown, or kicked
- Indoor and outdoor climbing and swinging equipment appropriate for a child of the same age.

If a child in your program is receiving ECI services and the child's parents want some services provided during your time with their child, an ECI professional will work with you to integrate sessions into your existing routines. An ECI motor therapist, for example, may help you arrange your child care space, suggest new or different ways to use toys and equipment, or



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plan activities that help all children develop gross motor skills.

## **Resources**

To learn more about gross motor activities for all the children in your program, you may want to consult the following resources:

Play activities to encourage motor development in child care: [www.extension.org/pages/25802/play-activities-to-encourage-motor-development-in-child-care](http://www.extension.org/pages/25802/play-activities-to-encourage-motor-development-in-child-care)

Gross and fine motor activities for early childhood: [www.earlychildhood.msstate.edu/resources/motoractivities/pdfs/infant-toddler.pdf](http://www.earlychildhood.msstate.edu/resources/motoractivities/pdfs/infant-toddler.pdf)

Perceptual and motor development domain: [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/itf09percmotdev.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/itf09percmotdev.asp) ■