

Calgary Youth Physiotherapy Ltd.

www.calgariyyouthphysio.com

□ Suite 203, 7720 Elbow Drive SW

Calgary, AB T2V 1K2

Tel: (403) 259-8534 Fax: (403) 259-8409

□ Suite 101, 4616 Valiant Drive NW

Calgary, AB T3A 0X9

Tel: (403) 289-9883 Fax: (403) 289-9873

“RED FLAGS” IN GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

In the Child’s History and observation – pay attention to a child that was/is:

12 months and under:

- Not rolling by 7 months of age
- Not pushing up on straight arms, lifting his head and shoulders, by 8 months of age
- Not sitting independently by 10 months of age
- Not crawling ("commando" crawling--moving across the floor on his belly) by 10 months of age
- Not creeping (on all fours, what is typically called "crawling") by 12 months of age
- Not sitting upright in a child-sized chair by 12 months of age
- Not pulling to stand by 12 months of age

14 to 30 months:

- Not standing alone by 14 months of age
- Not walking by 18 months of age
- Not jumping by 30 months of age
- Not independent on stairs (up and down) by 30 months of age
- "walking" their hands up their bodies to achieve a standing position
- only walking on their toes, not the soles of their feet
- frequently falling/tripping, for no apparent reason
- still "toeing in" at two years of age
- unusual creeping patterns

All ages:

- Any *LOSS* of skill in the child’s development

In observing the child, pay extra attention to:

1. The child with general movement and positioning difficulties:

- The child who has difficulty sitting in varied positions (ring, cross leg, long sit)
- The child who looks “stiff”/ “awkward” when sitting or performing activities
- The child who holds or retracts one limb; protects one limb or side of the body
- The child who fatigues easily during movement activities:
- Huffs or puffs on stairs,
- Sit often during gym class or falls frequently towards the end of free play time
- Presents with excessive slouches during sitting activities/can’t re-erect
- The child who falls over with a gentle bump
- The child who has difficulty getting up from the floor (uses bear walk, person, or table)
- The child that limps – slight or severe
- The child that has a tremor in one hand or arm, or who has an “unbalanced or staggered” look about their walk

2. The child who is particularly uncoordinated. For example:

- Has lots of "accidents"
- Trips or bumps into things

- Is awkward getting down/up, climbing, jumping, getting around toys and people
- Stands out from the group in structured motor tasks such as walking, climbing, stairs jumping, standing on one foot: or
- Avoids physical games

3. The child who relies heavily on watching his or her own or other peoples' movements in order to do them himself or herself. For example:

- May frequently misjudge distances, or
- May become particularly uncoordinated or off-balance with eyes closed

4. The child who, compared to peers, uses much more of his or her body to do the task than the task requires. For example:

- Dives onto the ball (as though to cover the fact that he or she cannot coordinate a response).
- Uses tongue, feet, or other body parts excessively to help in coloring, cutting, tracing, or other tasks requiring concentration.
- Produces extremely heavy coloring, or
- Leans over the table when concentrating on a fine motor project

5. The child with extraneous and involuntary movements. For example:

- While painting with one hand, holds the other hand in the air or waves
- Walks on toes much of the time
- Shows twirling or rocking movements
- Shakes hands or taps fingers or
- Flaps arms or hands or makes strange, repetitive finger movements

6. The child who:

- Flinches or tenses when touched or hugged
- Avoids activities that require touching or close contact
- May be uncomfortable lying down, particularly on the back
- Reacts as if attacked when unexpectedly bumped, or
- Flinches from a ball even when trying to catch it

7. The child who has had a reasonable amount of experience with motor tools, but whose skill does not improve his activity accordingly. For example:

- The child who can't recall how to get on or move the scooter board
- The child who looks at the beam or trestle with confusion every time

Typical Milestones for Gross Motor Movements

By 2 years old, a child should be able to:

- Go up and down the stairs one step at a time
- Jump off a step with a 2 foot take off
- Stand on one foot for 1-3 seconds
- Kick a large ball, Throw a small ball,
- Step over low objects

By 3 years old, a child should be able to:

- Ride a tricycle
- Climb a jungle gym/ladder
- Start and stop movement on demand
- Turn sharply while running

- Balance on toes and heels
- Stand tandem
- Alternate stepping on stairs, going up
- Hopping on one foot is emerging
- Jump with both feet
- Catch a large ball by trapping

By 4 years old, a child should be able to:

- Gallop
- Hop on one foot 4-6 times
- Runs to avoid obstacles
- Throw a ball 10 feet forward
- Walks on a line/beam forwards
- Alternate stepping on stairs, going down
- Pump a swing

By 5 years old, a child should be able to:

- Stand on one foot for 8-10 seconds
- Walk on a balance beam forwards, emerging backwards
- Hop 8-10 times/foot
- Jump 2-3 feet forwards
- Skip
- Bounce a ball
- Play hopscotch
- Catch a small ball with hands from 5 feet

By 6 years old, a child should be able to:

- Stand on one foot for 10 seconds
- Walk on a balance beam in all directions
- Ride a bike
- Roller skate

References:

Cech, D.J., Martin, S.T. (2002). Functional movement development: Across the lifespan. W.B. Saunders, Philadelphia.

Ratcliffe, K.T. (1998). Clinical Pediatric Physical Therapy: a guide for the physical therapy team. Mosby, St. Louis, Hamilton, S. (2002). Evaluating the Clumsiness in Children. American Family Physician.

Preschool Enrichment Team. Child Care Choices for Boston. Red Flags.