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Signature: Signed electronically on Gov Hub

Physical Development Policy – June 2024



Introduction:

At Highfield Nursery School, we believe that physical development is an essential aspect of a child's holistic development. We recognise that young children need to engage in a wide range of physical activities to develop their gross and fine motor skills, coordination, balance, spatial awareness, and overall health and well-being. Therefore, this policy outlines our approach to physical development and how we implement it in our daily practice.

Physical Development Educational Programme:

We follow the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance on physical development, which outlines what children should be able to do by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and how we can support them in achieving those outcomes. Our practitioners use the Development Matters Physical Development as a guide to plan, observe, and assess children's progress in this area.

Developmental Movement Play:

We recognise the importance of movement play in children's physical development, which is why we incorporate Jabadao Developmental Movement Play in our daily practice. DMP is a play-based approach that supports children's motor development, coordination, and self-regulation through creative and fun movement activities. Our lead practitioner is Angie Draper and practitioners attend training and professional development opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills in implementing DMP in our nursery setting.

Right to be Outdoors:

We believe that children have a right to access outdoor play and exploration opportunities as part of their physical development. We have a large, well-resourced and natural garden and children have daily free flow access to our outdoor area. Our outdoor area is equipped with a range of resources and materials that promote physical development, such as climbing frames, mud kitchen and large sand pit, large rope swing, trikes, and scooters.

Play

Play is an essential part of a child's development, and it is a natural way for children to learn about the world around them.

Date Reviewed	June 2024
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- **Learning and Development:** Play provides opportunities for children to explore and learn about their environment, develop new skills, and practice existing ones. Through play, children can develop their cognitive, physical, social, and emotional abilities.
- **Creativity and Imagination:** Play allows children to use their creativity and imagination, which helps them to develop a sense of curiosity and wonder about the world. They can explore new ideas, experiment with different scenarios, and express their thoughts and feelings in a safe and supportive environment.
- **Social Skills:** Play provides opportunities for children to interact and communicate with others, which helps them to develop social skills such as sharing, taking turns, cooperating, and problem-solving. Play also helps children to develop empathy, understanding, and respect for others.
- **Self-Expression:** Play provides children with a safe and supportive environment where they can express themselves freely and creatively. This can help them to develop their self-confidence, self-esteem, and sense of identity.

Gross and Fine Motor development

Gross motor development: Gross motor skills involve the use of larger muscles and the whole body in movement, such as crawling, walking, running, jumping, and throwing. Developing these skills is essential for young children's physical health, as well as for their cognitive and social-emotional development. Gross motor skills help children to explore their environment, develop spatial awareness, and interact with others. It is important for children to have lots of experience and repetition in developing these skills.

Fine motor development: Fine motor skills involve the use of smaller muscles, such as those in the fingers and hands, and are necessary for tasks such as grasping objects, drawing, painting, and using utensils. Developing these skills is important for young children's academic success, as they will need to use their hands and fingers for writing and other fine motor tasks as they progress through school. Fine motor skills also help children to develop hand-eye coordination, problem-solving, and creativity.

Independence: The development of gross and fine motor skills can also help children to become more independent and self-sufficient. As they learn to crawl, walk, and run, they can explore their environment more freely and engage in more physical activities on their own. As they develop fine motor skills, they can learn to dress themselves, feed themselves, and complete other tasks independently. This will become increasingly important as children prepare to transition to school.

Vestibular and Proprioception Senses:

We understand that vestibular and proprioception senses play a crucial role in children's physical development, including balance, coordination, and body awareness. Therefore, we provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that stimulate these senses, such as spinning, swinging, climbing, jumping, and crawling. We also provide a range of sensory resources, such as balance boards, sensory paths, and tactile materials, to enhance children's sensory experiences.

Forest School:

We believe that Forest School provides a unique and valuable opportunity for children to engage in physical development activities in a natural setting. Therefore, we incorporate regular Forest School sessions into our curriculum. Mrs Coleman is Level 3 Forest School trained. Our practitioners are also trained to facilitate Forest School activities that support children's physical development, such as den building, rope courses, mud kitchen, and nature walks. Each class has two planned whole class sessions in the meadow each week.

Vocabulary

- Run - to move quickly on foot by taking rapid steps.
- Walk - to move at a regular pace by taking steps with one foot at a time.
- Skip - to move by hopping on one foot and then the other.

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- Jump - to move upward by pushing off with both feet at the same time.
- Hop - to move upward by pushing off with one foot while keeping the other foot in place.
- Gallop - to move by taking a step with one foot and then a leap with the other foot.
- Crawl - to move on hands and knees.
- Roll - to move by turning over and over, either on the ground or in the air.
- Climb - to move upward by using one's hands and feet to scale a surface.
- Slide - to move down a surface, either by sitting or lying down.
- Swing - to move back and forth on a suspended object, such as a swing or rope.
- Dance - to move rhythmically to music, often with a partner or group.

By learning these words, children can have a better understanding of different ways to move their bodies and develop their physical abilities in various ways. Encouraging children to explore different types of movement through play and physical activities can support their physical development and overall well-being.

To be read alongside Communication and Language policy with a more comprehensive vocabulary bank. We recognise that we cannot list a full list of vocabulary and the team at Highfield are not limited to the vocabulary documented within either policy.

Terminology used in physical development

important terminology related to physical development:

- Balance - the ability to maintain a stable position while moving or standing still.
- Coordination - the ability to use different parts of the body together smoothly and efficiently.
- Flexibility - the ability to move joints and muscles through a wide range of motion.
- Gross motor skills - the ability to use large muscles to perform physical activities like running, jumping, and throwing.
- Fine motor skills - the ability to use small muscles to perform activities like writing, drawing, and buttoning clothes.
- Proprioception - the sense that enables us to perceive the position and movement of our body.
- Vestibular sense - the sense that enables us to perceive our body's position in relation to gravity and to maintain balance.
- Spatial awareness - the ability to perceive the position of objects in relation to oneself and to each other.
- Agility - the ability to move the body quickly and easily.
- Stamina - the ability to sustain physical activity for a prolonged period of time without getting tired.
- Muscle strength - the ability of muscles to exert force against resistance.
- Reaction time - the time it takes to respond to a stimulus, such as catching a ball or avoiding an obstacle.

By understanding and using these words, parents, staff and children can better understand and talk about their physical development, and practitioners can support children in achieving their physical development goals.

Ideas to Support Physical Development at Home:

We recognise that physical development is not limited to the nursery setting, and parents and carers play a significant role in supporting their child's physical development. Therefore, we share information and guidance to families on how to support their child's physical development at home. Some ideas include encouraging children to play outdoors, providing opportunities for movement play, such as dancing and yoga, and participating in physical activities as a family, such as walking, cycling, and swimming. Also, by encouraging the Highfield Walking Wednesday, we encourage families to leave the car at home, or park further away from nursery and then walk, scoot or cycle the last bit of the journey to Highfield.