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Poor Motor Skills Linked to Poor Academic Skills?



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Founder / Director

This past October, the journal *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* published new evidence highlighting the relationship between motor skills development and academic ability in children.¹ They followed 174 preschoolers for three years. In the first grade, researchers gave the children a battery of tests to measure their motor skills and cardiovascular fitness. They then tested each child for math skills, reading fluency, and reading comprehension each year for three years. Cardiovascular fitness shows no correlation with academic ability. Motor skills, on the other hand, demonstrate a significant correlation with academic ability, and the correlation is stronger among boys. Motor skill challenges measured in grade 1 continue to correlate with lower academic performance in grade 3, suggesting that the challenges are not self-correcting. The current study adds to a body of evidence showing that motor skill delay correlates with reduced self-esteem and reduced composition skills in early school years and with educational, social, and emotional problems in the teen years.²⁻¹⁰



Research consistently demonstrates that, absent skilled intervention, children identified with motor skill delays in early childhood have motor skill problems and sequelae that persist into adolescence and adulthood.^{2,11-14} Delayed motor skill development is both identifiable and modifiable at ages 1 through 5. Earlier intervention will establish a foundation for school success. When children deviate substantially from these fine motor skill milestones, please make a referral to Emerge - A Child's Place for a pediatric occupational therapy assessment.

Motor Skills Milestones

Ages 1 to 2:

- Scribbles
- Can turn pages 1 or 2 at a time
- Feeds self with spoon and fork

Age 4:

- Copies a square
- Cuts out simple shapes
- Uses eating utensils skillfully
- Mature pencil grip

Age 3:

- Copies simple shapes, such as a cross or circle
- Holds pencil with thumb and forefinger, rather than fist (50%)

Age 5:

- Hand preference is established
- Draws a variety of recognizable pictures
- Can copy a triangle
- Writes his or her name
- Colors within lines



Affordable Care at Emerge – A Child's Place

Many parents find that insurance coverage for pediatric occupational or speech therapy is often limited. In these cases, Emerge has even more to offer in addition to uncompromising quality of care and excellent facilities. Even though the quality of care at Emerge is at the highest levels, you will find the fees at Emerge to be the most affordable.

Please tell parents about Emerge – A Child's Place
Believing in a Child's Potential to Flourish

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