

Parent Guide



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We are excited to share this content with you. If you are interested in finding more resources made especially for Parents, then check out these links to different areas of the **Twinkl Parents** hub.

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What is this resource and how do I use it?

Part of a detailed series of resources on 'Supporting Your Child's Learning in Reception', this parent guide gives you an overview of the physical development early learning goals, information on how your child may be taught at school and practical, fun ideas for how you can support them with their fine and gross motor skills at home.

What is the focus of this resource?

EYFS Framework

Supporting Your Child

Reception

Physical Development

Further Ideas and Suggestions

For creative ways to get your child moving, browse our **Gross Motor Skills** area. Don't forget, dancing counts, too! You might also like to try some of our **Learning to Write My Name Activity Ideas** with your child as this is likely to be a key area for them to work on in reception.

Parents Blog



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Physical Development

What is physical development?

Physical development has two aspects – ‘gross motor skills’ and ‘fine motor skills’. It underpins children’s development in all other areas. For example, by strengthening their hand and finger movements, children can then hold a pencil effectively and learn to write. Gross motor skills involve large muscle movements (such as walking and even sitting) whereas fine motor skills involve smaller muscles such as grasping and drawing. Generally speaking, gross motor skills need to be developed before fine motor skills but it’s not a linear process. Your child still needs to practise running, climbing and digging, alongside threading, cutting and using cutlery.

In early years, physical development is one of the prime areas of learning and there are two aspects within it:

Gross Motor Skills

Fine Motor Skills

The following pages contain more information on each early learning goal and how you can support your child to meet this end of year expectation at home. Visit these areas on the Parents Hub for amazing resources to help you make learning at home fun!

Gross Motor Skills

Fine Motor Skills

How will my child be taught physical development in school?

Every school is different so it’s best to talk to your child’s teacher or look on their website for more information. Some reception classes have PE lessons where they will focus on specific skills (perhaps balancing, or throwing and catching, for example) in their weekly lessons. Most reception classes will have access to outdoor provision for at least some of the day and this may be where gross motor activities are encouraged. They may use climbing or balancing equipment or be able to practise riding bikes and scooters. They may also be encouraged to play games where they run and negotiate space and objects. For fine motor development, lots of schools have malleable areas, ‘finger gyms’ or ‘tinker trays’ where children can access a range of activities and resources that are designed to strengthen their smaller muscles. Teachers will often change what is on offer in these areas - one week it may be threading, the next it could be a cutting activity. Physical development is taught throughout the different areas of learning, too. Your child will be working on their physical development skills when they are painting, drawing, writing, cutting up their lunch, doing their buttons or zip, walking up or down stairs, lining up... basically all the time!

Gross Motor Skills

Please remember, the early learning goals are the expectation for the end of reception. Your child will be working towards these throughout the year and gradually building on their skills. They don't have to be able to do everything all at once!

How can I support my child at home?

- Get active as a family! Walking, bike riding, swimming, kicking a ball, going to the playground – all great activities for helping your child's physical development.
- In a busy place, talk about how we need to move safely to avoid bumping into people. In a confined area, talk about how we need to move with smaller actions when there is less space.
- Set up an obstacle course in the house or garden and ask your child to negotiate it in different ways. Something as simple as a few sofa cushions, a couple of chairs in a row and a blanket to crawl under 'commando-style'! Challenge them – 'Can you move across the room without touching the floor/only on your hands and knees?' For more ideas, read our helpful [information sheet](#) on child-safe obstacle courses.
- Encourage your child to have a go on different equipment when at the park.
- Let them take some risks! You can still manage the risk (you wouldn't let them walk on an obviously crumbling wall) but they could practise balancing on a small kerb between a grassed area and the pavement.
- You don't necessarily need special equipment to play games such as basketball (which helps develop coordination skills) - a balled up pair of socks and an empty bin or basket will do! Be creative in making games from items you already have, like for this [Outdoor Water and Sponge Darts Activity](#) or these [Bed Sheet Parachute Games at Home](#).
- Short bursts of activity can be just as good as long games. Try playing movement games such as 'Beans' whilst waiting to get into school or keep something like this [Dinosaur Movement Dice](#) handy for a quick movement break.
- Encourage cross-body movements - actions that encourage your child to move their left arm or leg to the right and vice versa. Crossing the midline is great for developing coordination and creating links between the right and left sides of the brain. Try clapping games, sorting tasks and painting or drawing on a vertical surface.
- Remember that moving is fun! As adults, we sometimes forget this. Get jumping on the trampoline with your child or have a running race together. This shows your child the joy of movement and might change your outlook on exercise, too!

Early Learning Goal

Children at the expected level of development will:

- negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others.
- demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing.
- move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

Fine Motor Skills

Everyday movements count, too! Encourage your child to help with washing up, carrying small items upstairs or even sorting the washing. Try to limit screen time as well, to promote a more active lifestyle.

How can I support my child at home?

Early Learning Goal

Children at the expected level of development will:

- hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.
- use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery.
- begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

- Use malleable dough! It is great for developing hand and finger muscles and coordination. Try putting on some music and having a 'Dough Disco'. Prod, squeeze, pinch, poke and squash the dough in time to the beat. Use these words as you do the action. There's a malleable dough recipe below that is easy and quick to make.
- Make the dough together! Twinkl Parents Hub has lots of recipes for different malleable doughs, including themed doughs. We also have themed malleable dough packs, such as **autumn** and **Bonfire Night**, that can really engage your child in their learning.
- If your child is left-handed, make sure you have a pair of left-handed scissors for them to use. Although your child's teacher will be looking out for a dominant hand, it may be worth letting the school know if you are sure your child is left-handed. Many children have not yet decided at this stage, so don't worry if your child still uses both from time to time!
- Don't be afraid to give your child simple tools to use, such as scissors and blunt knives, under your supervision. If you are worried about your child using different tools, these helpful **safety cards** might be useful.
- Teach your child to use a knife and fork correctly. You could have a pretend meal with malleable dough and encourage your child to practise using their knife and fork in a more playful scenario if they find it difficult at mealtimes.
- Get in the kitchen and bake. Beating, stirring, rolling out, using cutters, decorating cakes or cookies – all great for physical skills.
- Bead threading, construction toys and **colouring** activities are all great for developing hand and finger strength.
- Your child might also enjoy pencil control activities. These can be similar to mazes or dot to dot activities and are great for quiet time or to keep to hand for waiting times (such as in a restaurant). We have several themed pencil control activities, including this **Halloween-themed booklet**, which your child might be

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No-Cook Malleable Dough Recipe

You will need:

- 200g plain flour
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 75g salt
- 2 tbsp cream of tartar
- 500ml boiling water
- food colouring
- eco-glitter (optional)
- 2 drops glycerine (optional - gives more shine)



Method:

1. Mix the flour, salt, oil and cream of tartar in a large mixing bowl.
2. Add food colouring to the boiling water and then add gradually to the dry ingredients until it becomes a sticky, combined dough.
3. Add the glycerine and/or eco-glitter, if you wish.
4. Allow the mixture to cool down, then knead it vigorously until all the stickiness is gone. Add more flour if it still feels too sticky.

Store in an airtight container, in the fridge or out of direct sunlight, for up to six months.



Disclaimer: Some ingredients and/or materials used might cause allergic reactions or health problems. You should ensure that you are fully aware of the allergies and health conditions of those taking part. If you have any concerns about your own or somebody else's health or wellbeing, always speak to a qualified health professional. Activities listed within the resource should always be supervised by an appropriate adult. Children should be supervised when using sharp items such as scissors or other tools. Please make sure you are aware that children may put craft items into their mouths, and that they should wash their hands afterwards. By using this resource, you acknowledge that it is the responsibility of supervising adults to ensure the safety of children in their care and that we will accept no liability as a result of the activity.