

Physical Development

At Ditton Nursery School children enjoy physical play both indoors and outdoors. Physical play that develops gross motor skills, for example running, jumping, climbing, skipping, hopping, balancing, kicking, throwing and catching, helps children to develop balance, control, co-ordination and an awareness of size, space and direction. During physical play children can also observe things from different perspectives, for example looking at things from the top of the climbing frame or from under a bench. Children's large muscle movements need to be supported and developed before they are ready to use their fine motor control to control a mark making tool. At Ditton Nursery we support the children in this by providing large mark making materials outside e.g. rollers, long handles brushes; plus other activities which support large motor movements e.g. waving / controlling scarves, plying with parachutes etc.

Gross motor skills need to be nurtured, not only because they are important for the child's long-term health and well-being but also because they support physical and cognitive development. These skills are developed informally during daily physical play. Physical development helps children to gain confidence and self-esteem as they discover what they can do, and it enables them to feel the benefits of being healthy and active.

We have a large well-resourced outdoor area. Outdoor play provides space and freedom that would be difficult to find indoors. It has an important role in the emotional development of children, providing them with the freedom to run, shout and play exuberantly within appropriate boundaries. They are also learning to work with others to solve problems e.g. carrying larger equipment, pedalling 2 seater bikes with a friend on; and to start to work in groups. Outside they can experience a wide range of emotions, for example the challenge of climbing high or the joy of running and jumping. They can begin to experience the satisfaction of solving physical challenges and problems that arise when playing with others.

Play opportunities are maximised indoors and outdoors to help develop fine motor skills such as grasping, screwing, pinching, picking, holding and threading, which are important for the development of eye and hand control. When children are ready we support them in developing their pencil grip, including which hand to use, and then in developing control of mark making tools. We also help children to learn how to choose the correct tools for a job and use them safely e.g. scissors, hole punches etc.

Young children learn and develop through:

- taking part in physical play and beginning to develop an understanding of safe practice;
- responding creatively to a range of stimuli including music, songs, action rhymes and stories; and
- having opportunities to develop social skills, such as turn-taking, sharing, co-operating and negotiating, and values such as trust, fairness and respect for others.

We also support children to develop the physical skills needed to be independent in self-care e.g. learning how to put on and then fasten their own coat.

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