

Glossary of Motor Skills Terms

Term	Definition	Why is it important
 <p>Bilateral Body Movement</p>	<p>The ability to use the right and left sides of the body at the same time or with alternating movements.</p> <p>Gross motor skills such as walking, climbing stairs, running, skipping, hopscotch and jump rope require bilateral coordination skills.</p>	<p>Good bilateral coordination indicates that both sides of the brain are communicating effectively and sharing information.</p> <p>Children with coordination difficulties can have trouble completing daily tasks like dressing and tying shoes or with fine motor activities such as banging blocks together, stringing beads and buttoning.</p> <p>It also affects visual motor tasks like drawing, writing and cutting.</p>
 <p>Body Awareness</p>	<p>Also known as kinaesthesia, or the awareness of the position and movement of body parts in relation to muscles and joints.</p>	<p>Proper body awareness tells us how far to reach for objects or how close to stand next to a person. Difficulties with body awareness may show as being uncoordinated or having delays in motor skill development.</p>
 <p>Spatial Awareness</p>	<p>Spatial awareness is knowing where your body is in space in relation to objects or people and to the ability to understand and respond to a change in position.</p>	<p>A complex skill that children develop from an early age. Allows children to locate objects and navigate successfully in their environments.</p> <p>Spatial thinking helps children learn problem solving skills, mathematical skills, reading and comprehension.</p>
 <p>Laterality</p>	<p>The dominance of one side of the body over the other because one of the brain's hemispheres declares supremacy over the other around age four or five.</p> <p>Refers to the brain's ability to control both sides of the body.</p>	<p>Developed over time through concrete experiences that reinforce the concepts of right and left. It takes time to solidify these concepts.</p> <p>Difficulty with left and right concepts after age six may also include other motor integration difficulties: poor coordination, an inability to shift feet easily while doing rhythmic activities, and difficulty to understand instructions with a direction.</p>
 <p>Crossing the Midline</p>	<p>Movements of hands or feet to cross the centre line to the opposite side of the body.</p> <p>Before crossing the midline, a child will typically use one side of their body at a time. For example, using the left hand only to play with a block on the left side.</p>	<p>Since the left and right sides of the brain each have different functions, communication between them is crucial for physical, emotional, and cognitive success.</p> <p>Difficulty crossing the midline affects visual tracking leading to difficulty with learning such as reading and writing. Meeting developmental milestones may be delayed.</p>
 <p>Manual Dexterity</p>	<p>The ability to use the hands in a skilful, coordinated way to grasp and manipulate objects and demonstrate small, precise movements.</p>	<p>Development of fine motor skills also builds gross motor skills like standing up, pulling, pushing and hand-eye coordination activities.</p> <p>The more a young child can do with the hands, the more development occurs in other areas. Spinning a hoop, rolling in a rope or twirling a baton develops manual dexterity.</p>