



## Gross Motor Play Ideas

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Note: For your convenience we have listed some products and companies. This is not an endorsement or an all-inclusive list. There are many other companies that make products promoting gross motor development that can be purchased from stores in your community or from catalogs. The addresses and phone numbers of the companies mentioned are listed on the last page.

### CHILDREN ON THEIR BACKS (SUPINE):

- **Baby Changer** - ABC School Supply Catalog, \$29.95. Vinyl pad with sloped sides. A nice way to position young children on their backs while encouraging shoulders and arms to stay forward and in midline.
- **Boppy Seat** - ABC School Supply Catalog, \$31.95. A very supportive, cotton-covered polyester-filled ring. Can help a child feel secure and supported while lying on his back. Holds the child's head up at a nice angle. Encourages shoulders and arms to stay forward and in midline.
- **Gymfinity** - Local stores or Hand In Hand catalog, \$44.95  
An A-frame play gym that suspends above child while on her back. Has eye-catching animals to reach for, bat at, and grasp. As child develops the ability to sit and stand, this play gym can be set at an angle or flat like a table top.

### CHILDREN ON THEIR TUMMIES (PRONE):

- Make a blanket into a horseshoe shape and place under child's chest to keep arms forward.
- Place toys in front of child at eye level while playing in prone position to encourage neck strength, improve head control and encourage the child to begin to bear weight on the arms.
- Use toys like a safety mirror, soft squeaky toys, dangling toys, musical toys or anything that you know will attract the child's attention.
- Place suction cup toys, rolling toys, or banging toys on a cookie sheet with a raised edge. Allows child to swat at toys to get a quick response.
- Choose toys with contrasting colors and place them on a metal cookie sheet. Toys will make noise rolling or banging on the metal sheet, and the lip on the tray helps keep the toy from rolling away.

#### **Bright Books** - Environments Catalog, \$23.75

Children are motivated to keep their heads up while in prone so that they can look at the appealing pictures of this four-book set. Books open accordion-style so they stand up and the hard plastic pages have pictures on both sides.

#### **Rock n Spin Mirror** - Little Tikes, local stores \$9.99

The unbreakable mirror surrounded by large, colorful balls that rock and spin at the slightest touch, encourages children to play in prone.

#### **Soft Photo Album Cottage** - Little Tikes, local stores, \$14.99

Familiar photos can be inserted into the sturdy, clear vinyl "windows" to keep a child's attention while playing in prone. The eight panels can be opened accordion-style or fastened into a cottage shape. Also features a mirror, rattle, crinkle rooftop and shutter.

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[www.lekotek.org](http://www.lekotek.org) • [lekotek@lekotek.org](mailto:lekotek@lekotek.org) • [www.ableplay.org](http://www.ableplay.org)

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## Gross Motor Play Ideas ...*(continued)*

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### **Playtime Kitties/Playtime Puppies** - Tyco, local stores, \$19.99

These plush kitties and puppies stand upright and make playful movements and sounds when activated by an extremely light touch. These engaging animals motivate a child to play in prone.

### **Musical Dream Screen** - Playskool, local stores, \$29.99

This wind-up musical toy has a moving, colorful screen. The slowly changing screen and music attract and sustain a child's attention while playing on his tummy.

### **Lay and Play Bobby Seat** - Kapable Kids or local baby stores, \$39.95

Play cushion that is horseshoe shaped and supports infant in prone position. Midline play is encouraged. Colorful, detachable toys will not roll out of reach.

### **Tumbleforms Wedges** - Sammons Preston, \$80 to \$155

Wedges offer support for children in the prone position. They come in a variety of sizes. Some have Velcro straps to provide gentle support as needed to securely position the child. Call for catalog to choose from large selection.

## **CHILDREN SIDE-LYING:**

- Side-lying on a couch can be effective, but adult supervision is required at all times.
- Use a pillow to cradle the child in side-lying. Place a pillow between the child's knees and another small pillow under head to help maintain the position.
- Attach a broom handle or dowel rod to two plastic or wooden blocks. Suspend toys along the rod using string or yarn so the child can reach them. This position helps the child bring his arms forward toward midline. A bolster or pillow behind the child's back and a small pillow between the legs can help the child maintain side-lying.
- Place an upright mirror with toys suctioned to it at eye level for the child to play with.

### **Side Snoozer** - ABC School Supply Catalog, 800-669-4222, \$31.95

This durable, washable and portable fabric mat has padding that supports a young child on his or her side. The side-lying position encourages a child to play with both hands at midline.

### **Tumbleform Tadpole (Pediatric Positioner)** - Sammons Preston, \$635

The Tumbleform Tadpole is a complete, adjustable modular system for positioning infants and young children in side-lying as well as prone and a variety of sitting positions.

### **Universal Side Lyer** (preschool through adolescent children) - Sammons Preston, \$263

The 42" x 23" base is angled upward so gravity can help position the child. Two soft, easy-to-use straps are adjustable and help a child to stay in side-lying.

## **CHILDREN CRAWLING:**

- To encourage a child to move along floor, use a sheet as a sling under the tummy to support the child while crawling.

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## Gross Motor Play Ideas ...*(continued)*

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- Set up pillows, wedges, etc., as obstacles for the child crawl over.
- Set up old boxes with windows cut out for peek holes for child to crawl through.
- Provide mats with scenery to encourage children to crawl, push cars and move people around.
- Go to a fabric stores and have them cut a scene to the size you want.

### **Peek-a-Boo Activity Tunnel** - Little Tikes, local stores, \$39.99

Great for social play. Play peek-a-boo through the side window or from one end to the other. Short in length, bright and airy for children who are frightened to go through longer, darker tunnels. Wide and tall for toddlers learning to crawl as well as younger children.

### **9-Foot Tunnel of Fun** - ABC School Supply, \$29.95

To add excitement to crawling, crawl through a fabric-covered, wire-supported tunnel! Place a toy or yourself on the other end and have the child crawl through. It is large enough for an average-sized adult to crawl through for follow-the-leader fun and to help ease a child's apprehension. A child can watch the adult crawl through first before trying himself.

### **Tonka Soft Walking Wheels** - Local stores, \$12.00

This battery-operated toy walks very slowly which encourages the child to crawl after it. Allows the child to "get to" the toy as a reward and then starts to move again after the child has played with the car for a short time.

### **Crawling 'Gator** - Constructive Playthings, \$65.95

Soft, vinyl-covered foam scooter board enhances upper and lower body strength and control as child scoots on his tummy.

### **Musical Playmat** - Constructive Playthings, \$21.95

Crawl on this vinyl-covered mat and receive an auditory response as you place hands and knees all over the mat. Easy to wipe clean.

### **Motor Mat-Vinyl** - Constructive Playthings, \$12.95

This play mat to enhance vehicle play is made of vinyl which allows for easy cleaning.

### **Hula Hoops** - Local stores, approximately \$5.00

Support hula hoop in Styrofoam or sand box in upright position and have children crawl through hoops. If children become comfortable, place an old sheet over the hoops to make it like a tunnel.

### **Fun Sounds Ball** - Fisher Price, local stores, \$14.99

Ball will play over 50 sounds, as a child crawls and rolls the ball on the floor. Easily activated with a slight movement, this ball encourages auditory attention and introduces cause and effect.

## **CHILDREN SITTING:**

- Prop the child up with pillows in the corner of couch or chairs.
- Sit the child in a cardboard box or sturdy laundry basket.
- Put an inflatable children's inner tube around the child's waist for extra support.

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## Gross Motor Play Ideas ...*(continued)*

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- Bouncy infant seats are available in many sizes that have safety straps to secure the child. Offers a semi-sitting position; movements by child cause the chair to bounce.

**Boppy Seat** - ABC School Supply or local baby stores, \$31.95

This horseshoe-shaped cushion encircles the sitting child for extra support.

**Tumbleform Chair** - Sammons Preston, Flaghouse-Special Populations

A variety of sizes and styles are available to give moderate to complete support. Call for catalog to see options. Seating is available as part of total systems that have multiple uses.

**Educube** - Available from Chime Time, Lakeshore, Constructive Playthings, ABC School Supply. Set of two, \$84; set of four, \$168

Educubes are big colorful cubes that offer three different seating heights. They are very stable and can also be crawled on, used as a step stool, or a table top. They can also be used with the Edutray that converts the Educube to a desk.

**Edutray** - Chime Time, \$54.95

The large white 14" x 21" tray snaps onto the Educube to provide a desk top. It also gives the child extra support in sitting. It folds and is easily stored.

**Bean Bag Chair** - Constructive Playthings, \$24.95 or ABC School Supply, \$26.50

These vinyl-covered chairs can be molded to provide comfort, varying degrees of support in sitting, and conform to the child's body. They are available in regular and toddler sizes.

**Corner Chair and Corner Chair with Tray** - Flaghouse-Special Populations or Jesana Ltd.

A variety of corner seats are available in different sizes. Some have trays to use as a play surface and for added support.

### ROCKING AND RIDE-ON:

**Rocking Rider Horse** - Today's Kids, local stores, \$89.99

A non-skid step-up mount makes it easy for kids to get on this horse. It has no springs for kids to catch their fingers in. A great toy for balance, two-handed play, and upper body strengthening.

**Activity Rocker** - Today's Kids, local stores, \$49.99

A bucket seat and seat belt facilitate trunk balance and positioning. Feet can be placed flat on the foot rest and an adjustable seat will allow the rocker to grow as your child grows. Dashboard full of toys to manipulate make it even more fun!

**Angel Fish Rocker** - Step 2, local stores, \$32.99

Straddle seating gives extra support for leg separation and a curved back follows the natural contour of a child's back. Plenty of room for a taller child to sit. Upper body muscles will be used as the child rocks and holds on with two hands.

**Scooter Board** - ABC School Supply, \$21.95

Plastic, square board with handles and four swivel casters. Children can sit and scoot or roll around on tummy using hands and feet to propel themselves. Hint: Set up bowling pins and have children knock them over on scooterboard.

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## Gross Motor Play Ideas ...*(continued)*

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### **Wooden Rocking Boat** - Environments, \$122

A large wooden rocking boat that can be turned over to become a flight of stairs. Children can practice climbing in the boat, sitting, and rocking. Flip it over and children can go up and down the steps.

### **Critter Car** - Lakeshore Learning Materials, \$29.50

This stable, scooter car is great for the beginning walker. It is a foot-to-floor rider that has a comfy, contoured chair for support.

### **Rock n Ride Pony** - Constructive Playthings, \$79.95

Stable rocker base converts to a self-propelled foot-to-floor riding toy. Soft mane and tail.

### **Whirl-o-Wheel** - ABC School Supply, \$216.60

A ride-on that will not tip over and turns 360 in place. Breaking action can be activated by a child with limited torso strength.

**Soft Rocking Cow, Rocking Whale, Airplane Teeter Totter, Rocking Horse, Ride on Lion, Cozy Coupe, Mini-van, Pick-up Truck, Rocking Rocket, Big Digger Truck, Soft Pony** - Little Tikes, at local discount or toy stores. Prices will vary.

These ten Little Tikes rocking and ride-on toys are made of durable plastic and are easy to assemble. The edges are safe and the bases are sturdy. Ride-ons and rockers help children with balance and trunk control. Motor planning is practiced as children learn to plant their feet on the ground or on the base of the rocker. Two-handed, midline play is exhibited as children hold on to the handles with both hands. Beginning steps are taken as children propel themselves on a foot-to-floor ride-on.

## **BALANCE AND JUMPING:**

### **Foot Stompers** - Set of 2, ABC School Supply Catalog, \$39.95

Two hardwood boards become launchers of bean bags or soft toys when stomped on with one or both feet. Encourages jumping, coordination and balance.

### **Balance Boards** - ABC School Supply Catalog, \$49.95

Wooden board with a half circle dowel attached to the underside. Child stands on balance board and shifts weight from foot to foot to rock board from side to side. Fun way to practice balance and coordination.

### **The Tots Tramp** - ABC School Supply Catalog, \$189.95

This trampoline encourages a child to bounce, jump, and balance. Thick foam-filled pads cover the metal frame and springs. 6' 6" frame diameter x 13" height

**Foldable Trampoline with padded handlebars** - ABC School Supply Catalog, Nursery size: \$139.95;  
Medium size: \$202.95

### **Hoppity Ball** - 18" diameter with handle, Environments Catalog, \$17.75

This bright yellow ball encourages bouncing, grasping, balance, and trunk control.

### **Hop-a-Long Rider** - 16" diameter, Constructive Playthings, \$18.95

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## Gross Motor Play Ideas ...*(continued)*

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Sit on this air-filled vinyl ball, hold on to the flexible handle and start bouncing! Practice balance and trunk control.

### **PLAY IN STANDING, CRUISING AND WALKING:**

- Follow “footsteps” placed on ground made out of wood or paper.
- Make “trails” out of tape on the floor and have child follow the road.
- Play follow the leader around the house or yard.
- Place the child’s feet in empty shoe boxes and have him/her walk around.
- Make an obstacle course and have the child practice going through it.
- Use a hula hoop. Have the child stand outside the hoop and hold on. You stand across from the child, also holding the hoop. Have the child walk using the hoop for stability.
- Place a ladder flat on the ground and have the child walk through the rungs.
- Play hopscotch!
- Cruise along windowsills or furniture.
- Set up chairs and have child walk from chair to chair. Place a toy on the last chair to encourage child to walk.
- Have child push a box filled with flour or a somewhat heavy substance.
- Make sure you keep eye contact with the child. Do not keep moving back as the child approaches you. Trust needs to be developed as the child anticipates a response from you as he/she walks toward you.
- Let child walk barefoot on different textures such as, grass, carpet, and sand.

### **Shopping Cart** - Little Tikes, local or discount toy stores, \$25

Push cart is a nice height for the beginning walker and the wide handle encourages good hand placement. Weigh shopping cart down with “real” grocery items, such as soup cans or bags of flour.

### **Walker Wagon** - Environments Catalog, \$59.50

This sturdy tip-proof wagon has a handle that is 22” high which encourages children to walk as they push the wagon in front of them. Children can also stand inside holding onto the handle as you pull them forward. This helps children get used to the sense of movement and going from one point to another.

### **Play About Walker** - Little Tikes, local or discount toy stores, \$30

Very wide wheel base for extra stability and leg and foot placement. It is a nice height for the beginning walker. Wheels have a good amount of resistance so toy won’t run out from under child. Manipulative activities on one side allows child to sit on floor and play (push it up against couch or wall).

### **First Steps** - V-Tech, local or discount toy stores, \$50

Provides good stability for beginning walkers. Vibration sensor activates music, reinforcing the child when walking. Detachable electronic activity board allows for hours of fun.

### **Lovin’ Sounds Nursery** - Playskool, local or discount toy stores, \$60

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## Gross Motor Play Ideas ...*(continued)*

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This uniquely designed nursery play center comes with high chair, wash tub, and crib all connected into one unit that is hinged in the middle. This nursery can be placed against a wall for added stability or angled a bit for easy access to all activities. Can encourage a child to stand, turn and walk along sides of nursery.

**Little Tikes Workshop** - Local stores, \$70

This well-equipped workshop comes with a variety of fun tools, a pretend sink and phone and plenty of nuts and bolts for building. Encourages a child to stand and manipulate all the interesting play pieces. Two-sided for group play.

**Action Workshop** - Fisher Price, local or discount toy stores, \$40-50

Children enjoy standing as they play with table saw, drill press, hand vacuum and phone. Pegboard holds tools to encourage reaching, which makes standing even more challenging.

**Chime-Along Push Toy** - Lakeshore Learning Materials, \$11.50

This push toy plays a merry tune while animals spin around. 22" long.

**Classic Corn Popper Push Toy** - Lakeshore Learning Materials or local stores, \$11.50

Children love pushing this toy as they walk back and forth. Makes an engaging "popping" sound as vibrant balls bounce around. 23" long.

**Spinning Circus Push Toy** - Lakeshore Learning Materials, \$10.50

Twirling critters and spinning stars will entice the new walker to keep moving. 24" long.

**Magic Vac Vacuum Cleaner** - Fisher Price, local or discount toy stores, \$18.99

Children love to push, pull and tug this magic vacuum across the floor. Makes motivating roaring sounds, lights up while balls pop around, encourages visual tracking and imitation.

**Kiddie Stompers** - ABC School Supply, \$7.50

Children stand with one foot on each stomper and hold the "reins" taut as they walk across the floor. Try going forward, backward or follow a curving path made out of masking tape placed on the floor.

**Double Easel** - Little Tikes, local or discount toy stores, \$50

Stand and be creative at the sturdy double-sided easel. One side is a chalk board; the other holds paper and has an attached tray for art materials.

**Beauty Salon** - Little Tikes, local or discount toy stores, \$60

This two-sided beauty center is stable enough for the child just beginning to stand and cruise. The mirror and styling tools keep a child's attention and encourage pretend play.

**Step-N-Stones** - Chime Time, \$32.95

Set up these six durable poly stepping domes to create an obstacle course for children to run around or step on.

**Musical Mats** - Local or discount toy stores, \$20

Walking on this plastic mat is like walking on a piano. Musical notes are played as the child puts pressure on the mat with his foot, knee or hand.



## Gross Motor Play Ideas ...*(continued)*

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### **Mulching Mower** - Little Tikes, local or discount toy stores, \$25

Pushing this sturdy, wide-based lawn mower will encourage walking while having fun indoors or out. Mower pops and revs like a real engine.

### **Pop O Whirl Mower** - Fisher Price, local or discount toy stores, \$25

Watch your child's confidence grow as she or he walks along with this mower. Wide-set wheels and handle will give a child the added support needed.

## TOY COMPANIES

### **ABC School Supply, Inc.**

PO Box 369  
Landisville, PA 17538  
800-669-4222  
[www.abc.schoolsupplies.com](http://www.abc.schoolsupplies.com)

### **Chime Time**

One Sportime Way  
Atlanta, GA 30340  
800-677-5705

### **US Toy Company**

**Constructive Playthings**  
13201 Arlington Avenue  
Grandview, MO 64030  
800-448-7830  
[www.constplay.com](http://www.constplay.com)

### **Environments, Inc.**

PO Box 1348  
Beaufort Industrial Park  
Beaufort, SC 29901-1348  
800-342-4453  
[www.eichild.com](http://www.eichild.com)

### **Flaghouse-Special Populations**

601 Route 46 West  
Hasbrouck Heights, NJ 07604  
201-288-7600  
[www.flaghouse.com](http://www.flaghouse.com)

### **Jesana, Ltd.**

979 Saw Mill River Road  
Yonkers, NY 10710  
800-443-4728  
[www.jesana.com](http://www.jesana.com)

### **Lakeshore Learning Materials**

2695 E. Dominquez Street  
Carson, CA 90810  
800-421-5354  
[www.lakeshorelearning.com](http://www.lakeshorelearning.com)

### **The Little Tikes Company**

2180 Barlow Road  
Hudson, OH 44236-0877  
800-321-0183  
[www.littletikes.com](http://www.littletikes.com)

### **Sammons Preston**

4 Sammons Court  
Bolingbrook, IL 60440  
800-323-5547  
[www.sammonspreston.com](http://www.sammonspreston.com)