

Emerge



A Child's Place

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Occupational Therapy
Speech Therapy

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The Importance of Fine Motor Skills for Preschoolers



Bonnie Hacker, OT
Founder / Director

In an article published in the *American Family Physician*, Dr. Hamilton makes two very interesting observations about the identification of motor skill deficits in young children.¹ One, the diagnosis of clumsiness in children is often missed because many parents do not recognize it as a serious and modifiable problem. Two, when parents do present concerns to their physicians, it is common for physicians to reassure parents that children will outgrow clumsiness. In fact, as Dr. Hamilton explains, 6.4% of children have coordination problems that they will not outgrow independently, that correlate with various problems later in life, and that are modifiable by occupational therapy programs.

Don't Outgrow: An expanding body of 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.²⁻⁶

Seriousness: Problems associated with the motor skill delay magnify over time. As teenagers, these children display higher rates of educational, social, and emotional problems.^{4,7-11} In early school years, delays of fine motor skill development seem to cause reduced composition skills¹² and to affect self-esteem.¹³ Educational professionals have been known to label these children as lazy,¹ and delay in self-care tasks such as tidy use of eating utensils can cause friction at home.

Screening: Diagnosis of fine motor skill delay rarely occurs before the age of 5.¹⁴ However, 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.



Ages 1 to 2:

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

Age 3:

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

Age 4:

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

Age 5:

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



Preparing for school is
fun at Emerge!

New Summer Programs at Emerge (and old favorites, too)

Capable Kindergarteners • Ready Writers
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Our summer programs offer an opportunity for children to receive a more intensive therapy experience, in a small group setting, for less cost. Many of these fun programs focus on skills that will help in pre and elementary school settings (e.g. fine motor skills, social skills, visual motor skills). To learn about these and other great programs, please call us or check out our website at

www.EmergeAChildsPlace.com

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