

The Whole Child

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1. Gross motor skills

Balance: Encourage your child to walk along a straight line, such as the joins in the concrete sidewalk, the floor tiles or a painted line. Then see if he can walk backwards along the line, without 'falling off'.

2. Fine motor skills

Manual dexterity: Let your child try threading large wooden beads onto a lace, or macaroni onto string.

3. Visual skills

Colour perception: Play colour matching games with construction blocks. Place a blue block in front of your child and ask her to place one of the same colour beside it. Repeat the game with other colours or other toys.

4. Auditory skills

Teach your child a new song, Bible verse, nursery rhyme or other culturally relevant verse. Sing it often as you go through your daily and weekly routines.

5. Mathematical skills

Numerical relations: Let your child practice counting while you tidy up. She can pick up two toys and say 'one, two' and then pack them away. Then repeat the process. If she can count to three, then let her do so. On average, children can count to the number that matches their age, but often they can count further than that. Use this activity to make a game of tidying up.

6. Language and thinking skills

Visit your bookshelf or the library and pick out some books to read and talk about together – board books, lift the flap books, first words books or even story books. Look at the pictures and discuss them together. Repeat your child's favourite stories often. Children enjoy the familiarity of a favourite story.

7. Faith-building

Set an example by allowing your child to witness your own relationship with the Lord. For example, pray out loud for a parking or for protection of your home and property when you leave. Pray for a safe journey or for healing when it is needed. As they say, children need to see us 'walk the walk, not just talk the talk.'