

The Whole Child

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1. Gross motor skills

Laterality: Place a long plank or even a broomstick on the floor. Ask your child to walk along the length of it with her legs astride the plank. This will force her to shift her weight from one side to the other.

2. Fine motor skills

Manual dexterity: Give your child a piece of bubble-wrap and let him pop the bubbles between his fingers.

3. Visual skills

Colour perception: Place a red, blue and yellow shape or construction block on a table in front of your child. Give her another block and ask her to add it to the block that is the same colour on the table. She must match the colours.

4. Auditory skills

Active Language Development: Teach your child a couple of songs or nursery rhymes. Repeat the same ones often until he masters them and then add some new ones to his repertoire.

5. Mathematical skills

Quantity: Give your child a plastic jug and some cups. Ask her to pour a little water into one cup and lots of water into another. Have fun repeating the activity and then let her tell you which one contains a little and which one contains a lot of water.

6. Language and thinking skills

Active Language Development: Make a point of teaching your child the vocabulary needed to express his emotions, so that he will soon learn to verbalize his feelings instead of acting them out in inappropriate ways (like sulking, whining or tantrums!). Teach him to recognize when he or someone else is angry, happy, sad, tired or irritated etc. Usually children understand more than they express, so don't be discouraged if at first he doesn't use this vocabulary.

7. Faith-building

Continue to teach your child self-control. When she is out of control, hold her firmly look her in the eye and tell her to stop the bad behaviour – screaming or crying, etc. If necessary, place her in a remote place like a bathroom for a few minutes time out until she calms down and then lovingly bring her out again and continue the teaching and training as required. She needs to start to understand that you are in authority and that there are consequences for certain behaviour.