



Assessment Means Form: Gross Motor

Assessment Overview: When using this assessment, teachers should aim to assess students in the most naturalistic environment first (i.e., observation), before moving on to more intentionally structured activities (i.e., the Situation and Task).

What you need to know to understand and observe: The purpose of this progression is to assess children’s gross motor skills.

Key Terms

- **Walking** is the process of alternately losing balance and recovering it while moving forward in an upright position. While moving forward, the body should display little up and down or side-to-side movement. Eventually, the arms and legs move in opposition.
- **Running** is an exaggerated form of walking. It differs from walking in that there is a brief flight phase during each step in which the body is not in contact with the supporting surface. Eventually, children develop the ability to use different pathways that include a variety of directions and levels (straight, curved, zigzag) to manipulate the space between self and others.
- **Galloping** is the combination of two fundamental movements, the step and the hop, with the same foot always leading in the direction of movement.
- **Skipping** is the combination of two fundamental movements, the step and the hop, with alternating feet leading in the direction of movement.

***NOTE:** Skipping is the highest skill on the progression. Developmentally, if a child has the balance, strength, and coordination required to skip, he/she should also be able to gallop (which requires less balance/coordination). If a child is skipping, he/she should be placed at that level on the progression, regardless of whether or not he/she can also gallop. As always, if you are unsure or need more information to make a decision about the child’s placement on the progression, collecting more evidence over multiple days is encouraged.*

Observation Instructions:

Potential Opportunities for Observation	Potential Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Skills A-C: Any space large enough to allow a child to walk multiple steps (e.g., classroom, playground, cafeteria). ➤ Skills D, & F-I: Any gross motor play space (e.g., playground, gym, sports field). ➤ Skill E: Any gross motor play space (e.g., playground, gym, sports field) that includes obstacles such as objects or people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No specialized materials needed

Placing a Child on this Progression: With all progressions, the goal is to identify the level at which the child is solidly performing. If the child is inconsistent at a given level, as children often are when they are learning a new skill, the correct placement is at a lower level. The teacher needs to collect enough evidence to be confident that the child is correctly placed on the progression. This will include multiple pieces of evidence where the child demonstrates the skill level at which he/she is placed and at least one documented instance of allowing the child the opportunity to demonstrate his/her skills/behavior at the next highest level. It will be difficult to place some children on a progression. Children who are not yet at Skill A should be marked as “Emerging” for that progression. Children who have reached the highest level of a progression should be marked at that highest level.



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Observation Prompts to Avoid:

- On the day of data collection, practice opportunities, modeling, instruction, and reminders of gross motor skills should only be provided after documenting a child's level on the construct progression.
 - If a child is being observed and expresses he/she doesn't understand a particular skill (e.g., galloping or skipping), the teacher can demonstrate that skill, BUT should only record evidence based on the child's performance **before** the support was given. The child would then need to be observed on another day for the skill in question.
 - Teachers also need to be aware that modeling for one child provides that support to all other children in the vicinity. Therefore, data should only be collected on the other children's performance prior to the support.
- Teachers should not document a child's performance at times when the child is distracted or frustrated.



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Gross Motor (by Skill-Level) Examples

Skill	Skill Progression	Skill-Level Teacher Instructions	Examples
A	Walks on a flat foot or walks on the toes.	- Observe child while walking	When walking across the classroom, Malik places his entire foot flat on the ground. His foot doesn't hit ground first with his heel and then roll onto ball of foot. Malik's feet are wide apart and he walks unsteadily. Jeni is regularly observed walking on her toes. As she walks, she appears unsteady.
	Walks by distributing weight from heel to toe WITHOUT arms and legs moving in opposition.		When walking, Kathy's heel hits the ground first and then rolls onto the ball of the foot. Her arms do not swing in opposition with her legs and instead are held out to the side to help her balance.
	Walks by distributing weight from heel to toe WITH arms and legs moving in opposition.		When walking, Logan's heel hits the ground first and then rolls onto the ball of the foot. His arms swing in opposition with his legs.
D	Maintains balance and control when running.	- Observe child while playing in a large space where child has room to run	Thuy runs across the blacktop to meet her friend who just arrived at school. Her running is controlled and she doesn't lose her balance or fall.
E	Maneuvers around objects and people while running.	- Observe child while playing in a space that includes obstacles (e.g., objects, people) and is large enough for child to run	While playing tag on the playground with a group of children, Muhammad runs around the other children and playground equipment to avoid getting tagged.
F	Emerging galloping skills.	- Observe child while playing in a large space where child has room for gross motor play	Monique is showing emergent galloping skills. She takes short steps, jumps high off the ground, and holds her arms stiffly. Her movements are stiff and arrhythmic.
	Gallops smoothly.		When Ethan gallops around the playground, he takes long steps, jumps low off the ground, and swings his arms freely. His movements are smooth and rhythmical.
	Hops forward smoothly on one foot.		When coming in from recess, Chun hops on one foot across the hopscotch grid painted on the blacktop. She hops smoothly and does not lose her balance.
I	Skips smoothly.		As Harrison skips around the playground, his arms and legs move in opposition with each other. His movements are smooth and rhythmical.



Gross Motor Situation

Simon Says

Situation Instructions: Teacher plays Simon Says with a small group of children in a large space with enough room for gross motor activity. Teacher explains how the game is played by saying:

1. "We are going to play Simon Says. I'll call out things for you to do but you should only do them if I say 'Simon Says' first. If I don't say 'Simon Says' and you do the activity, you are out for the next turn. You can come back into the game after you sit out for one turn."
2. "Let's practice: If I say 'Simon Says touch your nose' you should touch your nose (teacher models touching nose). If I say 'Simon says stand on one foot' you should stand on one foot (teacher models standing on one foot). If I say 'touch your head' you should NOT touch your head because I didn't say 'Simon Says' (teacher does NOT model touching head)." Teacher asks if any children have questions. Once all questions are answered, the game can begin: "Let's start the game!"
3. Teacher calls out a variety of activities including those from the construct progression (e.g., running, hopping, skipping) and documents children's performance on the Simon Says Documentation Form. In order to keep children who struggle with gross motor skills engaged, teacher should not call out the gross motor skills in order from easiest to hardest, but instead should mix them up. Teacher should also include typical Simon Says activities (e.g., touch your toes, touch your nose, stomp your foot) to encourage engagement of all children.

Situation Prompts:

- Example Simon Says activities related to skills on the construct progression:
 - Running around objects: Simon says, zig-zag around the slide and monkey bars [or other obstacles in gross motor play space] with your friends. Try not to run into anyone.
 - Hopping forward: Simon says, hop on one foot from here to the slide (children should be 5 to 6 feet away from the slide)
- **Note 1:** Teachers can adapt the rules to fit their children and classroom as long as children are not out for a significant period of time.
- **Note 2:** Children with emerging gross motor skills may not yet have the ability to demonstrate all skills in this progression and should not be "out" because they are unable to demonstrate a given skill (e.g., if teacher says, "Simon says gallop" and child runs instead, child should remain in the game).
- **Note 3:** Teachers do not need to include all of the steps in the progression if some steps have already been observed (e.g., walking).

Materials/ Settings

- ✓ Gross Motor Documentation Form
- ✓ Any gross motor play space (e.g., playground, gym, sports field). For Skill E only, play space should include obstacles such as objects or people

Things to Avoid

- ✓ Teachers should avoid documenting child's performance at times when child is distracted or frustrated



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Gross Motor Situation Examples

Skill	Skill Progression	Skill-Level Teacher Instructions	Examples
A	Walks on a flat foot or walks on the toes.		When teacher says, "Simon says walk to the swings," Yusif walks unsteadily and with a flat foot. When teacher says, "Simon says walk to the swings," Yvette walks on her toes. She is unsteady and holds her arms out to the side for balance.
B	Walks by distributing weight from heel to toe WITHOUT arms and legs moving in opposition.		When teacher says, "Simon says walk to the swings," Jeffery walks by hitting the ground with his heel first and rolling onto the ball of his foot. His arms are held up for balance and so he can catch himself if he falls (guarding).
C	Walks by distributing weight from heel to toe WITH arms and legs moving in opposition.		When teacher says, "Simon says walk to the swings," Ameer walks by hitting the ground with her heel first and rolling onto the ball of her foot. When she steps forward with her right foot, her left arm trails behind. When she takes the next step with her left foot, her right arm trails behind [in opposition].
D	Maintains balance and control when running		When teacher says, "Simon Says run to the slide," Michael runs to the slide without stumbling or falling.
E	Maneuvers around objects and people while running.		When teacher says, "Simon says run through the tricycles without bumping into them," Brian zig-zags around the tricycles scattered around the playground without bumping into them or the other children playing the game.
F	Emerging galloping skills.		When teacher says, "Simon says gallop to the swing set," Maria attempts to gallop but her movements are stiff and arrhythmic.
G	Gallops smoothly.		When teacher says, "Simon says gallop to the swing set," Kumar gallops smoothly to the swing set.
H	Hops forward smoothly on one foot.		When teacher says, "Simon says hop forward on one foot five times," Chelsea hops forward on one foot five times without losing her balance.
I	Skips smoothly.		When teacher says, "Simon says skip to the edge of the black top," Lucas skips smoothly across the blacktop. His arms swing in opposition with his legs.



Gross Motor Task

Purpose: This Task provides teachers with a structured process for collecting evidence about children's gross motor skills.

Setting: Any open space that is at least 15 yards across and allows children to engage in gross motor activities (e.g., field, playground, cafeteria)

Suggested Group Size: This is a small group task with up to 6 children.

Task Instructions:

1. The teacher creates a "finish line" by laying jump ropes end-to-end or by drawing a line with chalk.
2. The teacher places content cards in a row on one side of the finish line and a basket or other container (where children will place cards after using them) near the cards.
3. Children sit in a horizontal line facing the finish line at least 10 yards away. The teacher models instructions as the game is described to the children. (NOTE: The teacher should only model walking, not other gross motor skills such as skipping and galloping.)
4. The teacher explains the game to the children: "There are cards about [state the content] across the finish line. I will call two children's names at a time. When I call your name, you will go to the finish line, pick a card, and say what's on the card [or answer the question]. Then you will put the card in the basket and go back to your place. I will tell you HOW to move to the finish line. I might tell you to hop or run or walk, so listen carefully."
5. The teacher calls two children's names for each turn, telling the children how to move to the finish line. The teacher moves systematically through the steps of the progression with each round:
Round 1: Children 1 and 2 walk, children 3 and 4 walk, children 5 and 6 walk
Round 2: Children 1 and 2 run, children 3 and 4 run, children 5 and 6 run
Round 3*: Children 1 and 2 run around obstacles, children 3 and 4 run around obstacles, children 5 and 6 run around obstacles
Round 4: Children 1 and 2 gallop, children 3 and 4 gallop, children 5 and 6 gallop
Round 5: Children 1 and 2 hop, children 3 and 4 hop, children 5 and 6 hop
Round 6: Children 1 and 2 skip, children 3 and 4 skip, children 5 and 6 skip.
***NOTE:** For Round 3 (running about obstacles): The teacher scatters 2 to 3 obstacles (e.g., cones, hula hoops, beanbags, sand buckets) in the space between the children and the finish line. The teacher places the first obstacle at least three yards away from where the children are sitting and asks children to zig-zag around the obstacles. The teacher moves obstacles to the side after all children have finished Round 3.

Materials

- ✓ Jump rope, rope, chalk, or other material to create a finish line
- ✓ 36 content cards: index cards or note cards with grade-appropriate content or questions (e.g., sight words, letters, numbers, math problems, shapes)
NOTE: content cards should only include information that has already been taught to children; content that is too difficult may discourage children's participation
- ✓ Basket or other container for children to place content cards into
- ✓ Cones, hula hoops, beanbags, sand buckets, or other objects to be used as obstacles



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Task Prompts:

- Teacher may start the game at any skill level depending on the information needed to place participating children on the construct progression.
- Teachers can assist children who have difficulty picking up or manipulating content cards.
- In order to maintain children's engagement in the task, teachers can read content cards to children and/or give children the correct responses for any content cards they don't know.

Gross Motor Task Examples

Skill	Skill Progression	Skill-Level Teacher Instructions	Examples
A	Walks on a flat foot or walks on the toes.		When walking to the finish line, Jessica places her entire foot flat on the ground and doesn't hit ground first with her heel and then roll onto ball of her foot. She is unsteady when walking and her feet are held wide apart. Gregory walks on his toes to the finish line. He is unsteady when walking and his feet are held wide apart.
B	Walks by distributing weight from heel to toe WITHOUT arms and legs moving in opposition.		When walking to the finish line, Wayne's heel hits the ground first then rolls onto the ball of his foot. His arms do not swing in opposition with his legs. Instead, his arms are held slightly out to his side to help with balance.
C	Walks by distributing weight from heel to toe WITH arms and legs moving in opposition.		When walking to the finish line, Mia's heel hits the ground first then rolls onto the ball of her foot. When she steps forward with right foot, her left arm trails behind. When she takes the next step with the left foot, her right arm trails behind [in opposition].
D	Maintains balance and control when running.		Diego runs to the finish line without stumbling or falling
E	Maneuvers around objects and people while running.		When running to the finish line, Malik zig-zags around the obstacles. He changes directions, starts, and stops so that he does not bump into the obstacles or the other child playing the game.
F	Emerging galloping skills.		When galloping to the finish line, Yazmin's movements are stiff and arrhythmic. She takes short steps, jumps high off the ground, and holds her arms stiffly.



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Skill	Skill Progression	Skill-Level Teacher Instructions	Examples
G	Gallops smoothly.		When galloping to the finish line, David's movements are smooth and rhythmic. He takes longer steps, doesn't jump as high off the ground, and swings his arms at his sides freely.
H	Hops forward smoothly on one foot.		When hopping to the finish line, Christian hops smoothly and does not lose his balance.
I	Skips smoothly.		When skipping to the finish line, Nevaeh's movements are smooth and rhythmic. Her arms and legs move in opposition.