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Fundamental Movement Skills: Manipulative



Manipulative skills enable children to give or receive force to and from objects to achieve an outcome.

- **What are examples of manipulative skills?**

Manipulative skills include throwing, catching, kicking, rolling, dribbling, collecting or striking.

- **When would I see children using these skills?**

Children use these skills to play by themselves and with others, inside and outside, in both unstructured and structured situations using a variety of objects. Children imitate adults doing everyday activities such as cooking and cleaning using toy implements.

- **Are there milestones in the development of manipulative skills?**

Children develop individually and at different rates but there is a range of ages for the development of manipulative skills. Rather than using average age for the acquisition of a skill, it is more important to understand this development as a spectrum, whereby children will progress through different stages, no matter their age range. At 3 to 4 months babies are engaging in finger play and grasping objects such as rattles and soft toys. At 5 months babies can grasp a toy and transfer it from one hand to another. From 8 to 12 months babies develop a stronger grasp and can pick up some objects.

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The table below is a guide for manipulative skills:

	For each manipulative skill, children generally move through the following stages:			
Throwing	Can throw soft ball overarm but direction may not be controlled	Direction and force for overarm throw improving	Can throw a small ball overarm	Can throw a tennis ball in required direction with force
Catching	Can follow flight of ball but may find it difficult to catch	Can catch a soft ball after one bounce	Can catch a large soft ball that is thrown with outstretched arms	Can catch a soft ball that is thrown with both arms and secure
Kicking	Can kick stationary soft ball	Can kick a stationary ball with force	Can kick a rolling ball	Can run up and kick ball in required direction

- **How can opportunities be created to develop manipulative skills?**

Adequate space needs to be provided both inside and outside so that children can play with objects safely and develop and refine their skills. Time needs to be scheduled for structured and unstructured play using different objects on different surfaces such as digging with a scoop in a sandpit. Playing equipment should include balls of different sizes and textures and objects used in daily life such as spoons and plastic crockery.

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Links to the National Quality Standard (NQS) and the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

NQS Quality Area 2:
Children's health and safety

NQS Standard 2.2:
Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for

NQS Element 2.2.2:
Physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child

EYLF Learning Outcome 3:
Children have a strong sense of wellbeing -
Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

References:

Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing, Queensland Government (2012). Let's Get Moving. Retrieved from <http://www.npsr.qld.gov.au/community-programs/school-community/childhood-programs/preschooler.html>

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2013). *Guide to the National Quality Standard*. Retrieved from: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/the-national-quality-standard>

Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (2009). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Retrieved from: <https://www.education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework>