

# Physical Literacy Observation Tool (PLOT)

## What is Physical Literacy?

Physical Literacy is the **motivation, confidence, and competence** to move for a lifetime (Whitehead, 2010).

## Physical Literacy Observation Tool (PLOT)

PLOT is a guide for observing *early years* fundamental movement skills to enhance program planning, activities, and play-based environments.

PLOT is based on the **Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS)**. FMS are necessary prerequisites to being physically active for a lifetime. FMS are divided into three categories of skills: stability, locomotor, and manipulative.

1. Stability Skills
  - Ability to balance and stretch with a steady, stationary stance.
2. Locomotor Skills
  - Ability to move from one place to another.
3. Manipulative Skills
  - Ability to control an object using hands and feet.

For more details, please refer to the FMS chart located at the end of PLOT (p. 11).

**Please understand that PLOT is not a child development assessment tool.** Use PLOT in a play based setting or during naturally occurring situations to observe children's physical literacy skills.

## Suggested Uses of PLOT

- Resource tool for parents and ECEs
- General overview of children's physical literacy development
- Tool to compare children's growth at the beginning and end of a program/semester
- Tool for observation and/or screening

## Things to Consider Prior to PLOT Observations

- Development and movement skills are child-dependant. Therefore, you can complete the observations in **ANY** category if the observable moment is apparent regardless of the child's age (months).
  - Our suggestion is to start observing partway through the lower age band and continue until the child is not demonstrating a skill.
- Be mindful that many movements can be observed during daily activities, such as bending and balancing to putting on shoes or walking up the stairs.
- Note that **not** all movements maybe observable in your setting.
- PLOT is divided into 3 colour-coded categories.

Yellow 6 months – 23 months	Green 24 months – 47 months	Blue 48 months – ± 71 months
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## PLOT Observation Instructions – Let's Get Started!

1. Please review the questions **prior** to starting the observation.
2. Observe the child over the course of a week during everyday activities when he or she is spending time with you. Questions do not need to be answered in order.
3. Create a stimulating environment that elicits curiosity and exploration of each movement prior to the observation.
  - See the Material Suggestion Box (p. 2).
4. Active engagement in play and exploration is the best learning method for children. Use "observable moments" when the child is naturally playing or exploring to make note of movement skills.

\* Please note, the gender had been randomly assigned throughout.

Child's Name:	Is there a diagnosis for special needs? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, state or describe diagnosis below:	Observer's Name:
Date of Birth (MM/DD/YY):		Relationship to Child:
Gender:	Is this a familiar environment to the child? (if no, please explain):	Date Started:
		Date Completed:

### Material Suggestion Box

Part 1 – Stability Skills					
Infants		Toddlers		Preschoolers	
- Crib	- Bean bag	- Beam	- Crib / bed (walking the side in a straight line)	- Line of tape	- Hopscotch
- Bowl	- Leaves / Pine cones	- Line of tape		- Coloured blocks	- Cones
- Sippy Cup	- Any toy	- Coloured blocks		- Pattern on a carpet	- Beam
- Scarf	- Pillows/ cushions	- Pattern on a carpet / floor – using tiles	- Sidewalk curb (with supervision and caution)	- Pattern on a carpet	- Tires
- Puppets		- Playgrounds curbs	- Pillows/ cushions	- Logs	- Crates
- Snow				- Foam noodles	- Obstacles
Part 2 – Locomotor Skills					
Infants		Toddlers & Preschoolers			
- Crib / bed (walking the side in a straight line)	- Bean bags	- Stationary objects	- Leaves / Pine cones	- Rungs of ladder	- Crates
- Wagon	- Bowl	- Ball	- Question 21 – instead of a ball, it can be implemented on friend – chasing a friend to play tag	- Stair cases	- Edge of table
- Stroller	- Sippy Cup	- Scarf		- Obstacles	- Monkey bars
- Toys on wheels	- Scarf	- Bean bag		- Rocks	- Fences (if strong)
- Stairs – blocks, boxes, etc.	- Leaves / Pine cones	- Stairs		- Boxes	- Stairs made of blocks / boxes/ crates
- Pillows/ cushions	- Puppets	- Pillows/ cushions		- Crates	
	- Any toy	- Snow			
	- Snow				
Part 3 – Manipulative Skills					
Infants & Toddlers & Preschoolers					
- Balls	- Scarves	- Pine cones	- Blankets	- Ball	- Puppets
- Bean bags	- Flag	- Plush toys	- Leaves / Pine cones	- Net	- Any toy
- Pillows/ cushions	- Rock	- Pebbles		- Snow	

**Part 1 – Stability Skills – Stretching / Sitting / Balancing**

Child's Name:

Date of Birth:

Yellow = 6 months – 23 months    Green = 24 months – 47 months    Blue = 48 months – ± 71 months

	Consistent	Emerging	Not Observable	Comments/ Notes
<b>Does the child...</b>				
1. While on her tummy, hold her head straight up?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
2. While on her tummy, straighten both arms and push her whole chest off the bed or floor?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
3. While on her back, lift her legs high enough to see her feet?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
4. Sit up straight on the floor for several minutes?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
5. While standing, balance her own weight?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
6. While standing, bend down and pick up a toy and then return to a standing position?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>While standing, does the child...</b>				
7. Bend forward to touch his knees or toes?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
8. Stand on his tiptoes and stretch his hands up to the sky?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
9. <b>With</b> support, balance on one foot for about one second?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
10. <b>Without</b> support, balance on one foot for about one second? <i>(See Figure 1)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>Does the child...</b>				
11. Use his arms to balance, while walking on a straight line? <i>(See Figure 1)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>While standing, does the child...</b>				
12. Bend to touch her toes and then stretch her hands up to the sky?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>While on hands and knees, does the child...</b>				
13. Curve her back up to the sky and then bend down towards the floor? <i>(See Figure 2)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
14. Raise one arm straight out in front of her body, without falling over? <i>(See Figures 2, 3.3)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
15. Raise one leg straight out behind her body, without falling over?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>Does the child walk...</b>				
16. Walk in a circle, alternating feet?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
17. On a beam without falling off? <i>(See Figure 1)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
18. <b>Forward</b> on a straight line, <b>heel-to-toe</b> , without losing her balance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
19. <b>Backward</b> on a straight line, <b>toe-to-heel</b> , without losing her balance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

**Part 2 – Locomotor Skills – Walking / Crawling / Climbing / Running / Jumping / Hopping / Rolling**

Child's Name:

Date of Birth:

Yellow = 6 months – 23 months	Green = 24 months – 47 months	Blue = 48 months – ± 71 months	Consistent	Emerging	Not Observable	Comments / Notes
<b>Does the child...</b>						
1. While on his back, wave his arms and legs, wiggle, and squirm?			○	○	○	
2. Roll from his back to his tummy, getting both arms out from under him?			○	○	○	
3. Get into a crawling position by getting up on his hands and knees?			○	○	○	
4. Try to move across the floor to get a toy? <i>(See Figures 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)</i>			○	○	○	
5. Pull himself to a standing position by holding onto something?			○	○	○	
6. <b>With support</b> , sidestep around the crib or furniture?			○	○	○	
7. <b>With support</b> , take several steps without tripping or falling?			○	○	○	
8. <b>Without support</b> , pull himself to standing using furniture, let go, and take several steps			○	○	○	
9. <b>Without support</b> , stand up in the middle of the floor and take several steps?			○	○	○	
10. Push a toy on wheels, steering it around objects and backing out of corners?			○	○	○	
11. Walk and seldom fall?			○	○	○	
12. <b>With support</b> , walk up or down the stairs by <b>placing both feet</b> on each stair?			○	○	○	
13. Run and then stop, without bumping into things or falling? <i>(See Figure 4)</i>			○	○	○	
14. Jump up with both feet leaving the floor at the same time? <i>(See Figure 4)</i>			○	○	○	
<b>Does the child....</b>						
15. Walk around corners and <b>stationary</b> objects, without falling or bumping into anything?			○	○	○	
16. Walk around <b>moving</b> objects and people without falling or bumping into anything?			○	○	○	
17. Move in several directions: forward, backward, sideways, under, and over?			○	○	○	
18. Walk up or down stairs by <b>placing only one foot</b> on each stair?			○	○	○	
19. Run without falling most of the time?			○	○	○	
20. Run while holding a large object in both hands? <i>(See Figure 5)</i>			○	○	○	
21. Chase a ball? <i>(See Figure 4)</i>			○	○	○	
<b>Does the child...</b>						
22. Jump <b>forward</b> with both feet leaving the ground at the same time?			○	○	○	
23. Jump from a raised surface and land solidly on her feet? <i>(See Figure 6)</i>			○	○	○	
24. <b>With support</b> , hop on one foot?			○	○	○	
25. <b>Without support</b> , hop on one foot?			○	○	○	
26. <b>Without support</b> , climb a stable structure? <i>(See Figure 7)</i>			○	○	○	

**Part 2 – Locomotor Skills – Walking / Crawling / Climbing / Running / Jumping / Hopping / Rolling**

Child's Name:

Date of Birth:

Yellow = 6 months – 23 months	Green = 24 months – 47 months	Blue = 48 months – ± 71 months	Consistent	Emerging	Not Observable	Comments / Notes
<b>Does the child...</b>						
27. Walk on his tiptoes?			○	○	○	
28. Lie down and roll like a log on the floor or down a hill?			○	○	○	
29. Stop, start, and change direction smoothly when running?			○	○	○	
30. Run around corners and <b>stationary</b> objects without falling or bumping into anything?			○	○	○	
31. Run around <b>moving</b> objects and people without falling or bumping into anything?			○	○	○	
32. <b>Jump</b> forward from a standing position, starting with his feet together?			○	○	○	
33. <b>Hop</b> forward on one foot without putting down the other foot?			○	○	○	
34. <b>Hop</b> from one foot to the other several times while staying in the same place?			○	○	○	
35. <b>Skip</b> forwards across a room, alternating feet?			○	○	○	
36. <b>Leap</b> over small obstacles?			○	○	○	

**Part 3 – Manipulative Skills – Grasping / Throwing / Catching / Kicking**

Child's Name:

Date of Birth:

Yellow = 6 months – 23 months

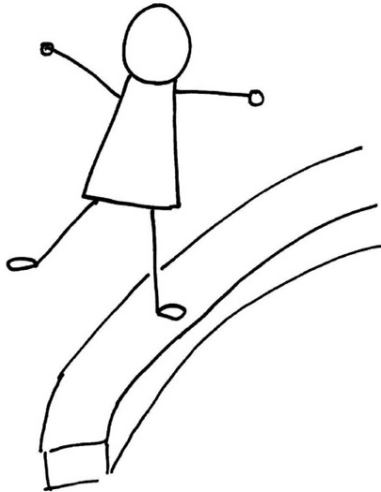
Green = 24 months – 47 months

Blue = 48 months – ± 71 months

	Consistent	Emerging	Not Observable	Comments / Notes
<b>Does the child...</b>				
1. Reach or grasp an object using <b>both hands</b> ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
2. Pick up an object with only <b>one hand</b> ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
3. Bang an object up and down on the floor or table?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
4. While holding an object in each hand, clap the toys together? <i>(See Figure 8)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
5. Pass an object back and forth from one hand to the other?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
6. <b>Roll</b> a ball on the floor with <b>both hands</b> ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
7. <b>Roll</b> a ball on the floor with <b>one hand</b> ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
8. <b>Throw</b> a ball in the air with <b>both hands</b> ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
9. <b>Throw</b> a ball in the air with <b>one hand</b> ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
10. <b>With support</b> , kick a stationary ball?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
11. <b>Without support</b> , kick a stationary ball?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>Does the child...</b>				
12. Using both hands, <b>throw</b> a large ball?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
13. Using one hand, <b>throw</b> a small ball?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
14. <b>Catch</b> a large ball by making a basket with both arms against his body?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
15. <b>Catch</b> a large ball using both hands?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
16. <b>Kick</b> at a ball with his leg straight?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
17. <b>Kick</b> at a ball with his leg bent?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>While standing still, does the child...</b>				
18. Kick a <b>stationary ball</b> ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
19. Kick a <b>moving ball</b> ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>Does the child...</b>				
20. <b>Throw</b> a ball with one hand in the direction of a person or basket?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
21. <b>Catch</b> a small ball?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
22. Play “ <b>catch</b> ” with others, <b>throwing</b> and <b>catching</b> ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>While standing still, does the child...</b>				
23. <b>Kick</b> a moving ball in a specific direction?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<b>While running, does the child...</b>				
24. <b>Kick</b> a moving ball?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
25. <b>Kick</b> a moving ball in a specific direction?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

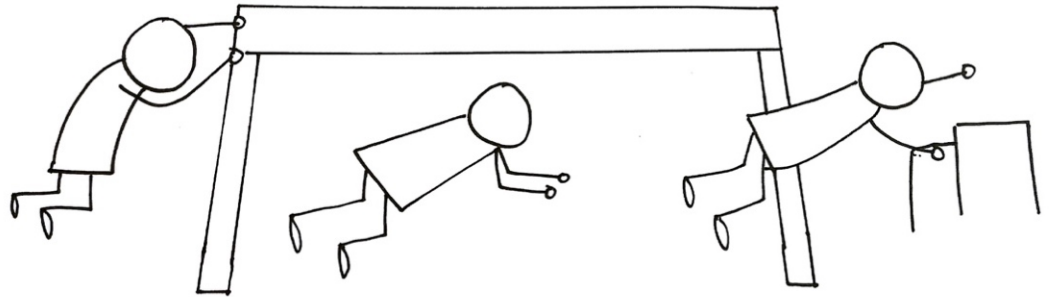
**Visual Reference – Part 1 – Stability Skills, Part 2 – Locomotor Skills**

The illustrations show alternative suggestions for specific physical movements within PLOT questions. Please understand that all movements can be easily introduced and observed through natural play moments.



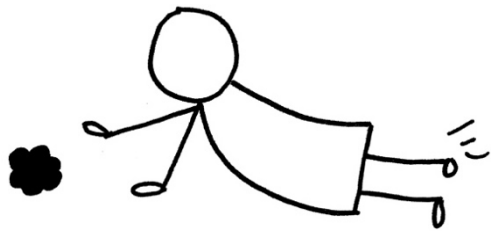
**Figure 1.**

A child is balancing on one foot, walking on a beam, using both of his arms to balance. PLOT observer will be able to observe multiple questions during what seems to be one physical movement.



**Figure 2.**

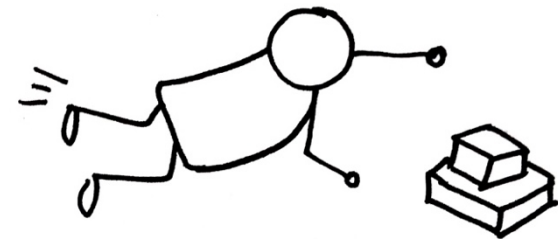
This stretch can easily be observed and introduced during natural play moments such as crawling under a table or child entering a tunnel.



**Figure 3.1.**



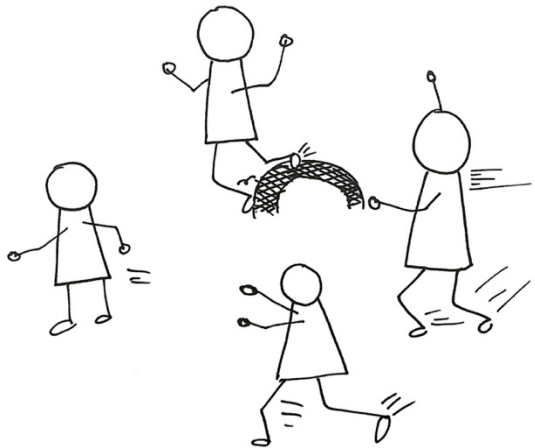
**Figure 3.2.**



**Figure 3.3.**

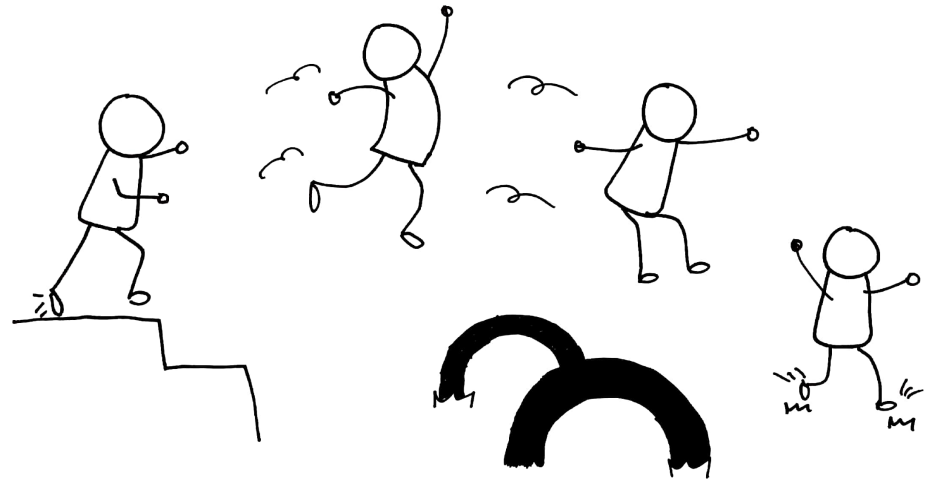
Figure above (Figure 3.1, 3.2, 3.3) illustrate different movements that can be observed as Part 2 – Question 4.

Visual Reference – Part 2 – Locomotor Skills, Part 3 – Manipulative Skills



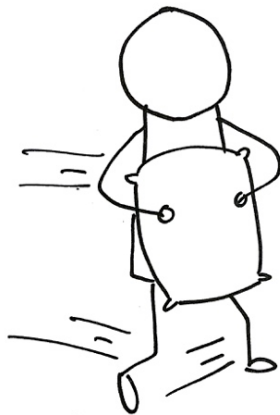
**Figure 4.**

Children are chasing each other and enjoying natural play. Question 21 can be alternatively observed when children chase each other during natural play.



**Figure 6.**

The figure illustrates when a child jumps from a raised surface such as stairs, steps, edge of a curb, etc.



**Figure 5.**

Part 2, question 20 can be observed using other equipment.



**Figure 7.**

A child is climbing a fence. This is an alternative observable moment of question 26 and it can be adapted to crates, chairs, tables, etc.



**Figure 8.**

This movement can easily be observed during natural play moments such as, clapping her hands together, like “Pat-a-cake.”



#### **Part 4 – Observations, Addressing Environment, Motivation, and Confidence**

1. Does the **indoor** environment **encourage** physical activity?
2. Does the **outdoor** environment **encourage** physical activity?
3. Does the ECE/parent (adult) **encourage** physical activity?
4. Does the ECE/parent (adult) **actively participate** in physical activity with the child?
5. Is the child **curious** about the opportunities to be physically active (i.e. express interest)?
6. Does the child **explore** physical activity opportunities?
7. Does the child **engage** and persist in physical activities (i.e. repeat to mastery)?
8. Does the child **build upon** or extend his or her skills (challenge him or herself)?
9. Does the ECE/parent promote **curiosity** in the child's learning environment?

## Part 5 – Environmental Considerations

These questions are designed to prompt further reflection about your child care environment

1. What **materials or equipment** could you add to the **indoor play space** to further promote physical literacy?
2. What **materials or equipment** could you add in the **outdoor play space** that would further enhance physical literacy?
3. What kinds of **activities** could you consider planning if you take the children's **interest** into account? For example – a 2-year-old is interested in farm animals, how could you turn this into a physical activity?
4. How can **you** model physical activity both inside and outside?
5. What are some ways that you promote **curiosity** in a child's learning environment?

Where Could Children Learn or Practice This Skill

My Child Can

Stability skills

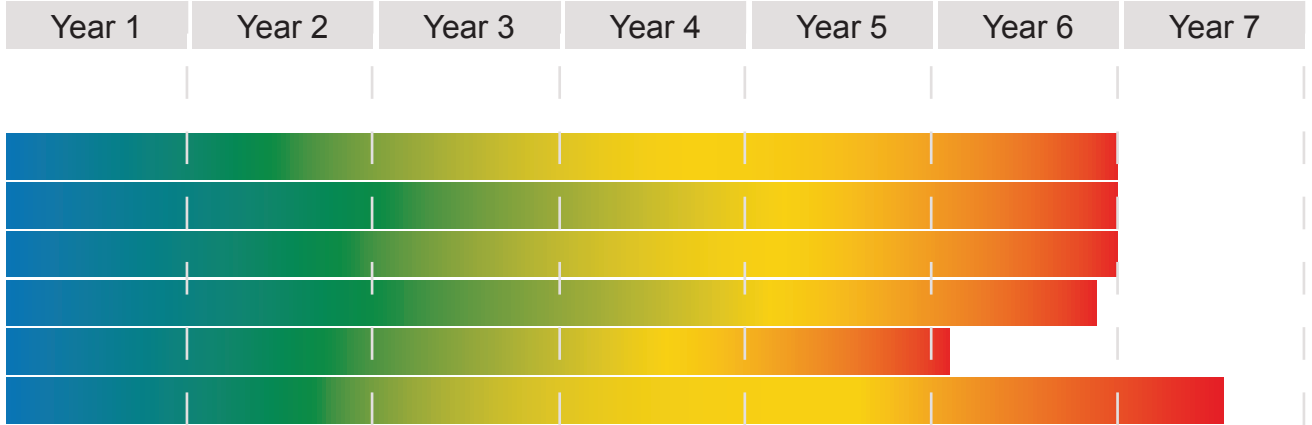








- Stretching
- Balancing
- Twisting
- Bending
- Turning
- Curling



Locomotor skills

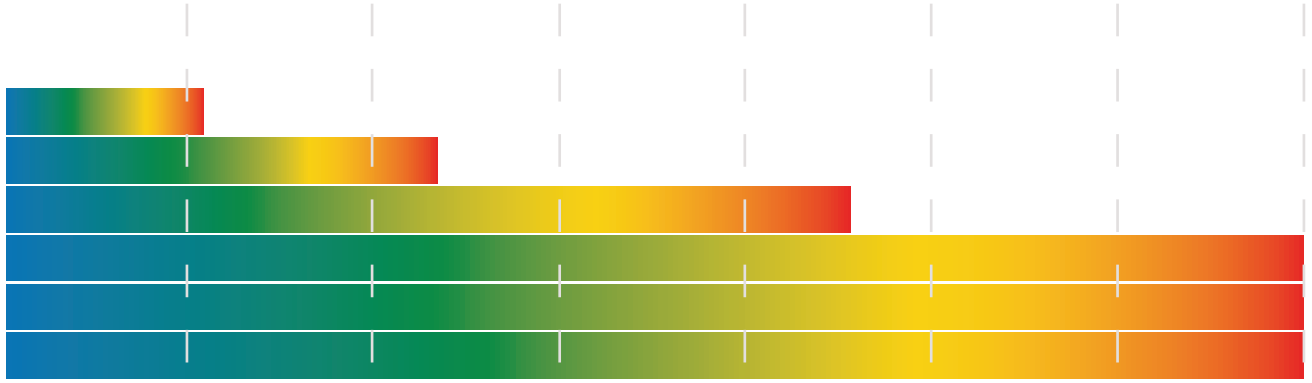








- Crawling
- Walking
- Running
- Jumping
- Hopping
- Skipping



Manipulative Skills

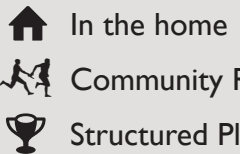
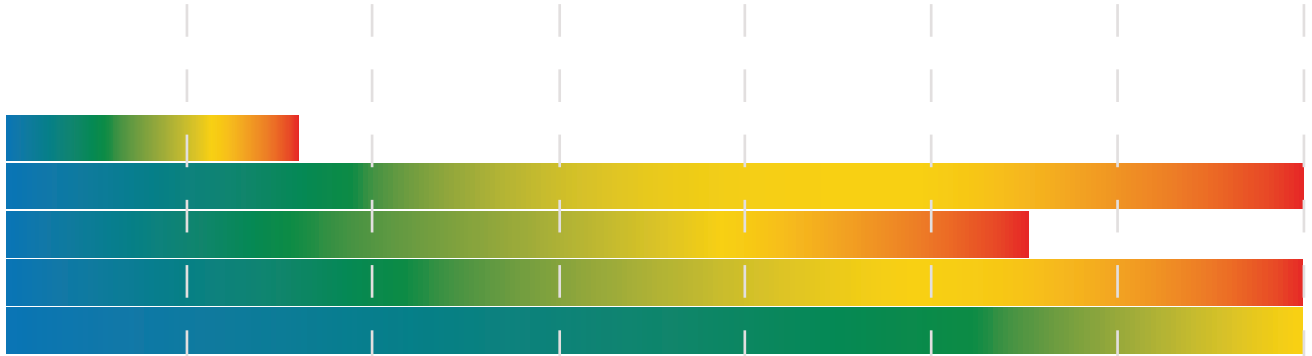








- Grasping
- Throwing
- Kicking
- Catching
- Striking



In the home  
Community Recreation  
Structured Play



School  
Preschool

Blue: Body not mature enough  
Green: Normal onset  
Yellow: Best time to teach or practice  
Red: Intervention program if skill not learned