

## Motor Planning

What is it? The ability to create an idea of what you want to do, plan how you are going to do it and then physically do the activity. This is a complex process that requires cognitive thought, feedback from our body and motor action. Motor planning is normally a subconscious process although for some people this is a more conscious process, especially when learning a new task and will require lots of repetition.

Why is it Important? We use motor planning for activities throughout the day such as brushing your teeth, using a knife and fork, using playground equipment, negotiating an obstacle course or walking in the classroom around desks and chairs.

How you can help: For motor planning to occur, a child must be encouraged to THINK about what he/she is doing. If no thought is involved in the task, then it is no longer therapeutic on a planning level. For example: Say to the child "How are you going to get over the chair to fetch the ball on the other side?"



- Break down the task into smaller parts e.g. skipping – learn to turn the rope first without jumping, then practice jumping over the rope without turning the rope, then put the two together.
- Talk the activity through, describing exactly what your arms/hands/legs are doing.
- Repetition is helpful.
- You may need to give some “hands on” prompting / to help the child “feel” the required movement or position.
- Visualise the task before he/she does it (close eyes)
- Verbalise what they are going to do before they do it, or repeat what it was he was told to do.
- Verbalise the sequence i.e. what must be done next and what was done previously.
- Verbalise the end result before he/she does it. Planning involves the anticipation of the end result.
- Analyse whether his/her plan worked after the execution, and if not successful the child must work out an alternative method.
- Follow a routine e.g. dressing, lay clothes out in the same place each morning
- Modify the activity – make it easier e.g. dressing – sitting on a chair so the child doesn't have to balance, arrange the clothes in the right order to start with so the child learns the sequence, then get the child to problem solve what they need to do first.
- Use simple one or two step commands when giving instructions but try to get the child to problem solve the activity.
- Keep it fun! Set out obstacle courses for the child to go over, under, around, hopscotch, clapping games.

