

How Motor Skills Affect Learning

Most are aware of the benefits of physical activity for people of all ages... a stronger cardiovascular system, improved muscle tone, weight management, motor coordination, etc. Additionally, there are brain-boosting benefits that help children with **brain** function and learning, leading to better school performance. Unfortunately, however, many adults aren't knowledgeable about the significance of underdeveloped motor skills, especially balance and coordination, on the learning process. Therefore, children engage in activities that boost these skills leading to more learning success.

Although balance and coordination don't seem like they would directly impact learning, they are linked. When children have problems with balance, which is a skill needed for **body control**, they fidget more and have bad posture; therefore, they struggle to focus and retain information in school. Balance is part of the **vestibular** system and is responsible for motor planning and hand-eye coordination. When this system isn't developed, there is a disconnect between the **brain** and the body, requiring that children use their **focus** to keep their bodies calm instead of on learning. Because balance is achieved through our center of gravity, girls tend to have better balance than boys. As a result, boys are observed to be more fidgety and active in classroom settings.

Since **children** need to be successful in school and feel **confident** in that setting, our goal should be to make balance and coordination automatic so brain space can be better used for learning and retention. During physical activity, areas of the brain that are triggered during coordinated motor activity are also sparked during some cognitive tasks. In addition, exercise stimulates the Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor, which is a protein that is involved in changes to learning. The hippocampus, the learning center for the brain, also increases in size during exercise and the pre-frontal cortex activates as well. Therefore, consistent engagement in gross motor development improves attention and memory, necessary skills for learning, and better school performance.

While most sports help develop physical skills, the **SKILLZ** Child Development Centers take it a step further. The innovative curriculum was strategically designed with the brain in mind. Not only do children master gross motor skills for their stage of development, but classes are **taught** in such a way that activates neural connections in the **brain**, stimulates working memory, and fosters fluid intelligence. This groundbreaking approach not only develops physical skills but also trains the brain. As a result, children participating in this program have increased self-control and confidence, increasing school learning success.

When children have good coordination and balance, sitting still takes less brainpower and focus. This gives them the brain space to concentrate on listening to their teacher and processing and learning new information. Strategically designed gross motor skills **development** programs can aid in this and help students become more physically developed while also giving them a better edge with learning. Consistent engagement is key and the earlier a child becomes involved in focused gross motor development, the better.