



Moving & Thinking

When kids start moving - they learn new ways of thinking!



As kids move and explore their environment (home, people, toys, etc.), they learn about the world around them. Here are a few research-based examples describing the link between **motor** and **thinking** skills.

Motor Skills

Thinking Skills

Watching & Looking



Looking at someone (or something) is a complex motor skill that requires strength and coordination of head, neck, and eye muscles. When kids look at new and interesting things and people, they learn how to make eye contact, focus and shift their attention, and recognize patterns and objects.

Watching and looking helps kids get better at reaching, touching, exploring, and understanding language.

Exploring Objects & Toys



When kids explore toys by touching, throwing, squeezing, or putting them in their mouth, they learn about the toys' weight, shape, texture, and temperature. They figure out how to use things like rolling a ball, stacking blocks, eating with a fork, or shaking a bell to make noise.

By learning these toy properties, **kids start to see differences and similarities between toys, categorize toys, and understand cause-and-effect** (if I hit this button, music will play). Exploring toys with their mouths helps kids make more sounds, which can **help them start talking**.

Sitting



Learning to sit allows kids to see the world from a new perspective. While sitting, kids can reach to get objects and toys that they want. They can also watch their hands while playing, which helps them learn about hand-eye coordination. Learning to sit changes how caregivers and kids interact with one another. Once a child can sit, caregivers tend to talk more about the toys they're playing with, provide more learning opportunities, and share more moments of joint attention—focusing on the same toy or activity. **Focusing on the same toy or activity with your child is one of the best ways for them to learn new skills.**

Walking



When kids start walking, they explore more toys and more space (instead of just the living room - now they are in the kitchen, bedroom, etc.) for longer periods of time. When walking, kids encounter new situations and become better at solving problems and understanding cause and effect. **Being able to walk requires many parts of the brain to work together - which helps the brain to grow in more mature ways.**

If kids aren't walking yet, other ways of moving on their own, like crawling on their tummy or knees or driving a toy car, can help them learn new thinking skills. Before they start walking, standing up by themselves or with your help lets kids see the world in a new way, makes their bones stronger, and helps them build social skills.

If your child is receiving physical therapy to support their motor skills - ask your therapist how they are also helping with your child's thinking skills.

