



# OT Time!



## May 2019 – Motor Planning

Motor planning. It's a term we hear so often, but what does it really mean? And more importantly, how is it affecting and impacting your child?

### What is Motor Planning?

Motor planning (sometimes called **praxis**) is an important skill that we use in order to *execute* a certain movement. It allows us to know, remember, and perform specific steps that make a movement or action happen. We use this for all physical activities in our daily lives.

Motor planning is addressed through:

- *Gross motor skills* – large muscle movements that help us do things like walk, jump, and balance
- *Fine motor skills* – small muscle movements that control our hands, wrists, and feet for more precise tasks
- *Coordination* – the way we organize all these activities in order to move efficiently

### How Does Motor Planning Work?

When we're learning a new action, we have to try over and over again until we get it right.

With each adjustment made, our body receives feedback. We use this feedback to determine the most efficient way to complete a task. After repetition and time, these tasks become automatic.

### Trouble with Motor Planning

When a child has motor planning difficulties, each time they complete a task may feel like the first time. They are not able to learn from the feedback that their bodies receive as quickly as others. Because of this, it takes additional time to learn basic skills that may typically seem "easy."

### Possible Signs of Motor Planning Difficulties

- May appear clumsy or accident prone
- Trips often or bumps into things
- Breaks toys/objects *unintentionally*
- Difficulty with self-care tasks with multiple steps
- Trouble playing with/using manipulatives
- Messy or sloppy eating
- Difficulty completing new, unfamiliar tasks
- Desire for sameness
- Frequently drops items
- Confused about how to initiate motor tasks
- Difficulty with sequencing and timing of tasks
- Difficulty keeping belongings organized
- Trouble navigating around obstacles



### How Can You Help?

- Break down tasks into smaller steps.
- Use pictures, videos, or other visuals.
- Use simple language.
- Allow time to complete tasks.
- Give a demonstration.
- Give one direction at a time.
- Give specific feedback.
- Create obstacle courses or play games with directions, such as Simon Says.
- **Practice, practice, practice!**



For more tips and resources, visit:  
[www.aces.org/services/occupational-therapy/parent-resources/](http://www.aces.org/services/occupational-therapy/parent-resources/)  
[www.pinterest.com/acesets](http://www.pinterest.com/acesets)

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