

# Practical Examples of Activities Focused on Motor Skill Development in Children with Special Educational Needs

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## Introduction

Motor skills are a crucial component of a child's overall development. In special education, we frequently encounter activities aimed at enhancing motor skills in children with special educational needs. Therefore, we consider it essential to highlight and present activities that significantly contribute to a child's comprehensive development. In our article, we interpret activities that we have found to be proven effective, specifically targeting the development of fine and gross motor skills in children, with the potential for application across various disabilities.

The individual activities we propose align with the currently valid state educational programs in Slovakia and also reflect educational areas, sub-areas, performance standards, and content standards.

The activities we suggest are based on the creative work of student Dóra Bacsfaiová, who, as part of her bachelor's thesis, focused on developing motor skills in preschool children.

## Activities Aimed at Developing Fine Motor Skills

**First activity (fine motor skills):** „Spring with Katie the Centipede“

**Educational area:** Health and movement

**Sub-area:** Hygiene and self-care activities

**Performance standard:**

- Mastering basic self-care activities

**Content standard:** Acquiring and improving self-care activities

**Competencies:**

- Communication competencies – understands simple adult requests
- Learning and problem-solving competencies – can concentrate on play and purposeful educational activities for a reasonable amount of time
- Social and personal competencies – behaves empathetically towards others, behaves in a group or collective according to social rules and norms

**Methods:** motivational, fixation, diagnostic

**Organizational form:** Frontal, group educational activity

**Materials:** buttoned centipede and sun, notebook

**Methodical procedure for activity implementation:**

**Motivation, motivational phase:**

- a) Tell the children a story about a centipede: „The sun is shining outside, different bugs are coming out of the ground, and Katie the centipede has also

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appeared. She went for a walk, but since the weather is deceiving, she needed a coat. The coat had beautiful colored buttons. But she couldn't button up her coat. She was very sad. Children, can we help her?"

- b) „To keep the centipede warm and not need a coat, we must make the sun stronger. We can do this by adding rays to it. With their help, it will be stronger and warmer.”

**Activity implementation:** Children's task is to button individual buttons. They will practice buttoning larger buttons on the centipede and then attaching smaller buttons to the sun as rays. At the end of the activity, praise the children and play the songs „Rafael the Centipede” and „The Sun Has Awakened.”

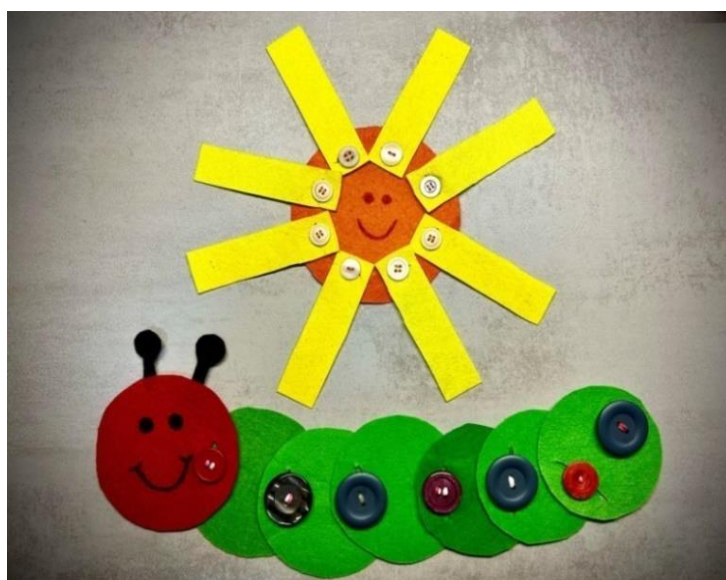


Image 1: Aid for the activity „Spring with Katie the Centipede”  
Self-made aid (Source: Bacsfaiová, 2023)

### **Second Activity (Fine Motor Skills): „Let's Hang the Laundry”**

**Educational area:** Health and movement

**Sub-area:** Hygiene and self-care activities

**Performance standard:**

- Mastering basic self-care activities

**Content standard:**

- Acquiring and improving self-care activities

**Competencies:**

- Communication competencies – understands simple adult requests
- Learning and problem-solving competencies – can concentrate on play and purposeful educational activities for a reasonable amount of time
- Social and personal competencies – behaves empathetically towards others, behaves in a group or collective according to social rules and norms

**Methods:** motivational, fixation, diagnostic

**Organizational form:** Frontal, group educational activity

**Materials:** clothesline, clothespins, fabric cutouts of different clothing items

### **Methodical procedure for activity implementation:**

**Motivation, motivational phase:** Children sit in a circle. „Children, something terrible has happened. I just got a call from Košice, and I have to go there. But I have a big problem. I don't have any clean clothes. And since I'm with you now, I had to wash my clothes here with you. But I don't have much time. So I need your help. I need to hang up the washed clothes. Can you help me?”

**Activity implementation:** Children's task is to hang the clothes using clothespins.

1. Hang the clothes on the clothesline.
2. Hang clothes of the same color.
3. Hang different types of clothing according to the teacher's instructions.
4. Hang clothes according to the teacher's instructions: color + type. The difficulty of the activity is chosen according to the children's abilities.



Image 2: Aid for the activity „Let's Hang the Laundry” Self-made aid  
(Source: Bacsfaiová, 2023)

### **Activities Aimed at Developing Gross Motor Skills**

#### **First activity (gross motor skills): „Walk Through the Enchanted Forest”**

**Educational area:** Health and movement

**Sub-area:** Movement and physical fitness

**Performance standard:**

- Master the correct technique of walking and running, follow the rules of movement games, manipulate with equipment: throwing, catching, jumping

**Content standard:** Acquiring and improving the correct technique of basic locomotor movements. Manipulating with equipment: throwing a ball with one hand and with both hands.

**Competencies:**

- Communication competencies – understands simple adult requests

- Learning and problem-solving competencies – concentrates for a reasonable amount of time on play and purposeful educational activities
- Social and personal competencies – behaves empathetically towards others, behaves in a group or collective according to social rules and norms

**Methods:** motivational, fixation, diagnostic

**Organizational form:** Frontal, group educational activity

**Materials:** strips in three colors, circles in three colors, balls in three colors

**Methodical procedure for activity implementation:**

**Motivation, motivational phase:** We tell the children a short story: „Once upon a time, there was a princess who lived in a beautiful castle. One day, she went to the forest to pick beautiful colorful flowers. But this forest was not an ordinary forest, it was an enchanted forest. As she walked through the forest, she encountered several obstacles that she had to overcome to save herself. The obstacles were not difficult, but the princess got lost in the forest. Now you can save her.”

Meanwhile, the teacher prepares the tracks in advance and tells the children: „This is the path you have to take.”

**Activity implementation:** We prepare three tracks of different shapes and colors on the ground. The first track is straight, the second wavy, and the third angular. At the beginning and end of each track, we prepare circles with balls in the same shape as the track. Next, the children are shown the task. Their task is to walk along the track while maintaining balance, not stepping off the marked lines, and carry the ball.

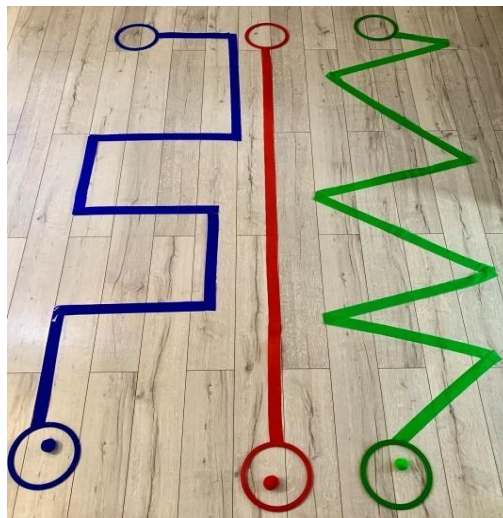


Image 3: Aid for the activity „Walk Through the Enchanted Forest”  
Self-made aid (Source: Bacsfaiová, 2023)

### **Second Activity (Gross Motor Skills) „Wading Through the Marsh”**

**Educational Area:** Health and Movement

**Sub-area:** Movement and Physical Fitness

**Performance Standard:**

- Master the correct technique of walking.
- Master jumping with both feet and over obstacles.
- Master acrobatic skills – standing on one leg.

**Content Standard:** Acquiring and improving the correct technique of basic locomotor movements. Developing motor coordination through exercises involving jumping with both feet in place, jumping over obstacles.

**Competencies:**

- Communication competencies – understands simple adult requests
- Learning and problem-solving competencies – can concentrate on play and purposeful educational activities for a reasonable amount of time
- Social and personal competencies – behaves empathetically towards others, behaves in a group or collective according to social rules and norms

**Methods:** motivational, fixation, diagnostic

**Organizational form:** Frontal, group educational activity

**Materials:** circles, pictures of footprints and handprints

**Methodological Procedure for Implementing the Activity:**

**Motivation, Motivational Phase:** The children are seated on a bench and motivated with a short story.

Once upon a time, there was a little girl who was walking home through the forest. Her path led through rocks that were in the middle of a swamp. She was very scared. Can we help her by overcoming this path together, because if we do it together, the little girl will surely not be afraid.

**Activity Implementation:** The teacher places pictures of footprints and handprints as a path that the child must navigate using various movements. Their task will be to touch the body parts they see in the picture. When they see a footprint, they must step on it, when they see a handprint, they must put their hand on it. This path is varied according to the children's abilities and skills. For example, we start with a simpler path for understanding, and then add more complex shapes.

At the end, we praise the children and tell them that through teamwork and help, everything can be overcome and fear can be more easily overcome.



Image 4: Aid for the activity „Wading Through the Marsh”  
Self-made aid (Source: Bacsfaiová, 2023)

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, we can state that movement plays a crucial role in the life of every individual, especially during childhood when their personality and abilities are being

formed. Freedom of movement is not only a physical need but also a psychological and emotional factor that influences a child's overall well-being and development. Play, as a natural way of learning, allows children to develop not only motor skills but also strengthen the cognitive and emotional aspects of their personality.

Individual fine motor skills of a child are the first visible manifestation of their perception of the world. They contribute to brain development and are essential for the formation of millions of neural connections in the developing nervous system. Systematic movement supports the strengthening of neural connections between the body and the brain. This network of neural connections is the main prerequisite for communication between the individual and the surrounding world (Goddard Blythe, 2012).

Individual experiences of a child with movement play an important role in shaping their personality, emotions, and achieving success. Learning is not just about writing, reading, and counting, as these are higher-level skills that are based on the integrity of the relationship between the body and the brain (Goddard Blythe, 2012). Movement is a very important factor for a person in terms of their quality of life. It means freedom of movement in an unrestricted open space. Movement is a tool for individuals to fulfill their life needs, including the need for free movement. Permanent restriction of movement has a very negative impact on a person's psyche, which can be a triggering factor for nervousness, stress, and frustration (Szabová, 2017). By considering the importance of movement activities in the daily program of children, especially those with special needs, we can contribute to their harmonious development.

The implementation of movement games and exercises in the educational process not only increases children's attention and interest but also supports their self-realization and positive emotional experiences. Therefore, it is essential that we pay increased attention to the motor development of children from an early age, thus providing them with a better foundation for their future life.

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