

A hint in the right direction

'Guided discovery' is a helpful way to teach skills during early childhood. Guided discovery involves asking children a series of questions, and providing hints on working out the best way to perform certain movements.

For example, a series of questions about throwing a ball can prompt your child to work out how to throw a ball further. Questions might include: 'Does the ball go further when it is thrown with one hand, or two hands?', 'Which ball goes the furthest?' and 'Is it easier to throw the ball a long way when you are standing still or running?'

Another example of guided discovery could involve questions on how to stay balanced on uneven surfaces. Questions could include: 'What size steps do you have to take to stay balanced?', 'Where should your feet go?', 'Where should you look while walking?' and 'Can your arms help?' Between each question, there should be plenty of time for your child to explore possible answers.

In guided discovery, questions aim to **lead** rather than **direct** children to further explore what they are able to do.

'Guided discovery
involves ...
providing hints'



GET UP & GROW

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD



Developing movement skills



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

Most children really enjoy active play. Parents can use this natural enthusiasm to help improve children's skills and confidence in being active.

Develop children's skills by suggesting improvements, and encouraging them to try new things. Basic movement skills, such as walking and throwing, lay the foundations for more complex activities later on. Children need to feel confident in exploring new ways to move. Look for opportunities to slowly build on what your child can already do.



Smart start to moving

All physical skills can be improved through the use of very basic prompts, and by slowly adding more challenging tasks. Start with simpler tasks, for example:

- Two legs provide more balance than one, so try jumping before hopping.
- Throwing, hitting or kicking a ball as far away as possible (distance) is simpler than throwing a ball towards targets (accuracy).
- Big, light and slow balls (such as beach balls or balloons) are often easier to kick and hit than smaller balls.

Upper body movements

Examples include building, hitting and digging.

Start by prompting children to:

- *build* with big, light objects, such as cardboard boxes or buckets
- *hit* large, stationary beach balls or scrunched-up paper
- *dig* through boxes of scarves or wool.

Progress to prompting children to:

- *build* with small and large objects, such as boxes, sticks or blocks
- *hit* with one hand, and then the opposite hand
- *dig* with spades or old containers in dirt or sand.

Lower body movements

Examples include jumping, kicking and walking.

Start by prompting children to:

- *jump* on the spot, to music or on chalk lines
- *kick* large, stationary blow-up balls or empty plastic containers
- *walk* on different surfaces or around different objects.

Progress to prompting children to:

- *jump* over or around objects, or over a longer distance
- *kick* using either leg, for longer distances or to a greater height
- *walk* in different directions and speeds, or on their tip toes.

Moving the whole body

Examples include dancing, climbing and balancing.

Start by prompting children to:

- *dance* to a variety of music with different sounds and rhythms
- *climb* on furniture, pillows or through hoops
- *balance* between chalk lines, inside a hoop or on smooth rocks.

Progress to prompting children to:

- *dance* with objects like streamers, or learn dance sequences
- *climb* over boxes, or up and down climbing frames and ropes
- *balance* on planks of wood, on one leg or with their arms in the air.

Children do not need expensive toys to help them develop movement skills – using everyday items can be a fun and low-cost way to practise skills. Children's movement skills can be improved with the help of positive, simple prompts, and plenty of time to be active.

