



Kinesiology and Meta-cognitive Psychological Services

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## **Recognizing Individuals With Motor Coordination Difficulties**

- Generally delayed two or more years in the acquisition of motor skills
- Culturally relevant motor skills are performed at 'lower levels' and with unacceptable proficiency.
- Poor ability with various sized balls in throwing, kicking, catching, and striking skills
- The individual will often withdraw from physical activities and associated environments (may be found leaning against the school walls or sitting by themselves during recess and/or lunch)
- Tend to avoid 'taking turns' in sports related activities
- Often demonstrate a low level of physical fitness (strength and endurance is lacking)
- Reduced motivation to participate in any 'movement' event

- Seem to 'forget' gym strip, swim suit, ice-skates and mittens, or other necessary equipment for physical activity; may often request notes from home to be excused from physical education class or other recreational activities
- Student may actually appear 'busy' during physical education class, but close observation reveals they are not truly involved
- May often complain of stomach aches and/or other ailments
- May be last to enter the gymnasium for phys. ed. class
- Often resist entering novel settings (e.g., the swimming pool), and once they do, may hold on to the edge or rarely venture into deep water
- Behavioural difficulties may become evident -- 'clowning around'; refusing to participate; disturbing other students; showing frustration by crying, stomping, and stating that the activity is 'stupid' (these serve as avoidance strategies)
- Will often avoid becoming involved in the 'center of action' in a game situation
- Tend to have a poor understanding of the object of various games and activities (e.g., may score in the opposite team's goal; not be sure when to chase or when being chased; run in the wrong direction)
- May attempt specific motor activities a few times, but then stop soon after

- Do not tend to initiate involvement in sporting activities, or be the first person to volunteer physical demonstrations, etc; rather, they prefer to wait and see what others do
- May follow other classmates or players but seldom fully engage in the game play
- Too much or too little force is often applied during skill performances
- Tend to be somewhat delayed in their response to a motor task
- Frequently confuse right/left directions
- May be seen 'stumbling' over their feet -- movements may seem jerky or awkward
- May see 'overflow' movements during times of intense concentration (e.g., mouth moving)
- Often have difficulty following rhythms (such as in music class or marching in unison)
- Timing is often inaccurate, and the student may misjudge distances, force, and speed
- Students may perform one component of a complex motor skill by isolating one body part and forgetting other coordinated movements
- May display stiff body action or too much rotation and excessive movement of other body parts -- they simply 'look' awkward

- Tend to have difficulty focusing on the important components of a motor skill demonstration -- often unsure of what to 'look' at
- May show signs of fear or intense resistance to becoming involved in a motor activity
- May also overestimate their ability, and, as a result, lack the concept of danger or risk involved in certain skills
- May be socially isolated -- or have very few friends
- Tend to exhibit difficulty with 'failure'
- May be able to perform one or more motor skills with a level of proficiency, but other motor tasks are extremely challenging
- Tend to prefer involvement in individual motor skills that have repetitive components to them (e.g., swimming, dance, bicycling)
- Have genuine difficulty with tasks that involve moving objects and individuals, or entire teams moving around them, and recalling numerous rules at the same time (e.g., basketball, soccer)
- May 'freeze' while on a certain piece of equipment or have difficulty initiating a motor task when others are watching
- General awareness of body / limb position is limited (e.g., whether moving or stationary)