

Why Large-Motor Play?

"In young children, motor experiences are essential to all aspects of development, wrote Jim Greenman in his classic design guidebook, *Caring Spaces, Learning Places: Children's Environments that Work*. He continued...

"Take climbing. It not only strengthens muscles and develops postural control, it also builds self-esteem and allows children to see and feel the world from different perspectives. Swinging and rocking force children to orient their in-motion perceptions to a constant world. Jumping causes children to learn that a constant — the ground — feels very different relative to the height of their falls. Hauling requires children to maintain balance while moving, and when they are unable to view their feet, to use a different perspective to avoid tripping. Motor activities constantly challenge children to integrate body, mind, and space. Children are scientists with their whole bodies.

"Large motor play has other values, particularly in a setting where one is very small, faces long days, and must fit into the schedules of adults and other children. It is in climbing, swinging, sliding, and so on that experiences of ecstasy, unbridled joy or power, concentrated tension, and wild physical abandon are most likely to occur. On the grayest of days, motor play affords children the opportunity for power and pleasure and emotional release."

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