

## PE Assessment and Strategies for Children with Developmental Motor Disabilities

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**PE/motor skill assessment is important** because motor skillfulness affects communication (through handwriting), social appearance (through peer acceptance), and motivation to engage in social settings (through play skills). Additionally, children with poor motor skills may be more likely to engage in contextually inappropriate behaviors.

Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have **difficulty with social communication skills and show repetitive, restrictive stereotypic behaviors** (e.g., rocking, hand flapping, etc.)

Children with developmental coordination disorder (DCD) have **significantly below average performance in movement skills & activities of daily living**, not explained by a specific neurologic disorder, low intellect, or age

### Using evidence based practice in assessment settings means

For children with ASD: Using visual supports, limiting spoken language, preparing students for assessment by instructing what to wear & what to expect, controlling the environment, use support staff if appropriate, and be mindful of the impact of testing equipment on performance

For children with DCD: Be goal oriented, use checklists, direct the child's focus of attention, and provide accommodations when necessary



### **Top Ten Strategies for Success in PE Assessments:**

1. Apply appropriate verbal instructions along with visual supports  
Consult Boardmaker software, MrsRiley.com, pinterest.com (Temple Department of Kinesiology), visuals.autism.net
2. Advise children to wear proper attire for assessment  
Athletic shoes and comfortable clothing
3. Provide a paraeducator or a peer tutor during assessment  
Having a familiar face helps, and they are a resource regarding student motivation
4. Limit distractions in the testing environment  
If possible, assess in quiet environment
5. Use the required equipment so that the results of their motor assessment are as accurate and reliable as possible.  
If alternative equipment is used, be sure to note that in assessment report
6. Focus on the activity/movement goal rather than its process  
Answer the "Why?" question
7. Provide checklists/routine, focus on Plan/Do/Check  
Creates a multisensory approach to help engage the child in the assessment process
8. Direct child's focus of attention externally, not internally  
External focus reduces confusion from sensory processing difficulties
9. Focus on including, not excluding  
Makes the child feel CAPABLE and EMPOWERED
10. Minimize task constraints  
Simplify (instructions, activities, focus)!

### **Resources:**

Breslin, C. & Liu, T. (in press). Do you know what I'm saying? Strategies to assess motor skills for children with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*.

Breslin, C. M., & Rudisill, M. E. (2011). The effect of visual supports on performance of the TGMD-2 for children with autism spectrum disorder. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 28, 342-353.

Liu, T. & Breslin, C. (2013). Fine and gross motor performance of the MABC-2 by children with autism spectrum disorder and typically developing children. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 7, 1244-1249.

Liu, T., & Breslin, C. (2013). The effect of a picture activity schedule on performance of the MABC-2 for children with autism spectrum disorder. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 84, 206-212