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IN THE LOOP

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Updates for Patients, families & friends

Low Tone: When Movement Takes a Little More Effort

Some children appear “floppy,” tire easily, or seem slower to meet motor milestones like sitting, crawling, or walking. This may be related to low muscle tone, sometimes known as hypotonia. Low tone doesn’t mean a child is weak or incapable but it can mean their muscles need more support to work efficiently against gravity. Children with hypotonia may prefer sitting rather than standing, lean on furniture or caregivers, struggle with balance, or avoid physically demanding play. Parents might notice delayed gross motor milestones, frequent falls, or difficulty keeping up with peers on the playground. Pediatric physical therapy helps children with low tone build strength, stability, and endurance through fun, movement-based activities. Therapy focuses on improving posture, core strength, balance, and coordination—skills that support walking, running, climbing, and everyday play. Early physical therapy can make a significant difference by helping children develop efficient movement patterns before compensations form. Supporting these skills early also builds confidence and encourages children to explore their environment more freely. If your child seems to fatigue easily, struggles with posture, or is delayed in motor milestones, a physical therapy evaluation can help determine whether low tone may be contributing and how to best support your child’s development.



OVERVIEW:

- Low Tone — When Movement Takes a Little More Effort
- Little Hands, Big Skills: Fine Motor Coordination to Watch for Ages 2–5
- Foot Development in Young Children: Flat Feet, Shoe Choices, and When to Worry
- My Toddler Understands Everything... So Why Aren’t They Talking Yet?

Upcoming Events:

- 1/1: New Year's Day: CLINIC CLOSED
- 1/8: Hailey, OT 2 Year PB Anniversary
- 1/15: National Hat Day
- 1/16: Hailey, OT Birthday
- 1/16: Valentines Cards for Project Angel Hugs DUE
- 1/17: Katie, PT 4 Year PB Anniversary
- 1/19: John, OT & Nicki, OT 27 Year PB Anniversary
- 1/19-1/23: Happy Birthday, PB!
- 1/19: Martin Luther King Jr. Day



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Little Hands, Big Skills: Fine Motor Coordination to Watch for Ages 2–5



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Fine motor skills involve the small muscles of the hands and fingers that children use for everyday tasks like feeding, drawing, and playing. Between ages 2 & 5, these skills develop quickly and support independence, confidence, and early learning.

Common fine motor skills to watch for include:

Ages 2–3

- Using both hands together during play
- Turning pages in a book
- Stacking blocks
- Using utensils
- Scribbling with crayons

Ages 3–4

- Stringing beads or lacing cards
- Snipping paper with child-safe scissors
- Drawing simple shapes
- Completing simple puzzles
- Managing Velcro or large buttons



Ages 4–5

- Coloring with improved control
- Cutting along straight or curved lines
- Copying letters, numbers, or shapes
- Using a more mature grasp on writing tools
- Manipulating small objects with accuracy



Parents may notice concerns when a child avoids these activities, becomes easily frustrated, or struggles with tasks, which can affect preschool and self-care skills. OT uses play-based strategies to build hand strength, coordination, and confidence at home and school.

Foot Development in Young Children: Flat Feet, Shoe Choices, and When to Worry

Flat feet are common in babies and toddlers and are often a normal part of development. A natural fat pad in the arch can make young children's feet appear flat even as strength and coordination are developing. Between ages two and five, arches may begin to form as children walk, run, jump, and climb. For many children, this happens naturally without intervention. Parents may want to seek guidance if they notice:

- Frequent tripping or falling
- Fatigue during walking or play
- Foot or leg pain
- Uneven shoe wear
- Difficulty keeping up with peers



Flexible, supportive shoes that allow natural foot movement are often recommended for young children. PT focuses on how a child's feet function during movement and play, supporting strength, balance, and coordination. If you have concerns about your child's foot development, a physical therapy evaluation can help determine whether additional support may be helpful.

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My Toddler Understands Everything...So Why Aren't They Talking Yet?"

Many parents of toddlers notice that their child seems to understand everything that's said to them but isn't using many words yet. While every child develops at their own pace, expressive language delays are one of the most common reasons families seek speech therapy in early childhood.

Understanding language (receptive skills) and using language (expressive skills) develop together, but not always at the same speed. Some children follow directions well, point to what they want, and show strong comprehension but struggle to use words, phrases, or clear speech. This can lead to frustration, tantrums, or reliance on gestures instead of communication.



Speech therapy focuses on helping children build functional communication skills through play-based, engaging activities that match their developmental level. Therapy may support vocabulary growth, sentence formation, sound development, and early social communication skills like turn-taking and joint attention. Early speech therapy can be especially helpful between birth and age five, when the brain is rapidly developing language pathways. Supporting communication early helps children express needs, connect socially, and build confidence as they approach preschool and kindergarten.

If you're wondering whether your child's speech development is on track, a speech-language evaluation can provide clarity, reassurance, and guidance—whether therapy is recommended now or simply something to keep monitoring.

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